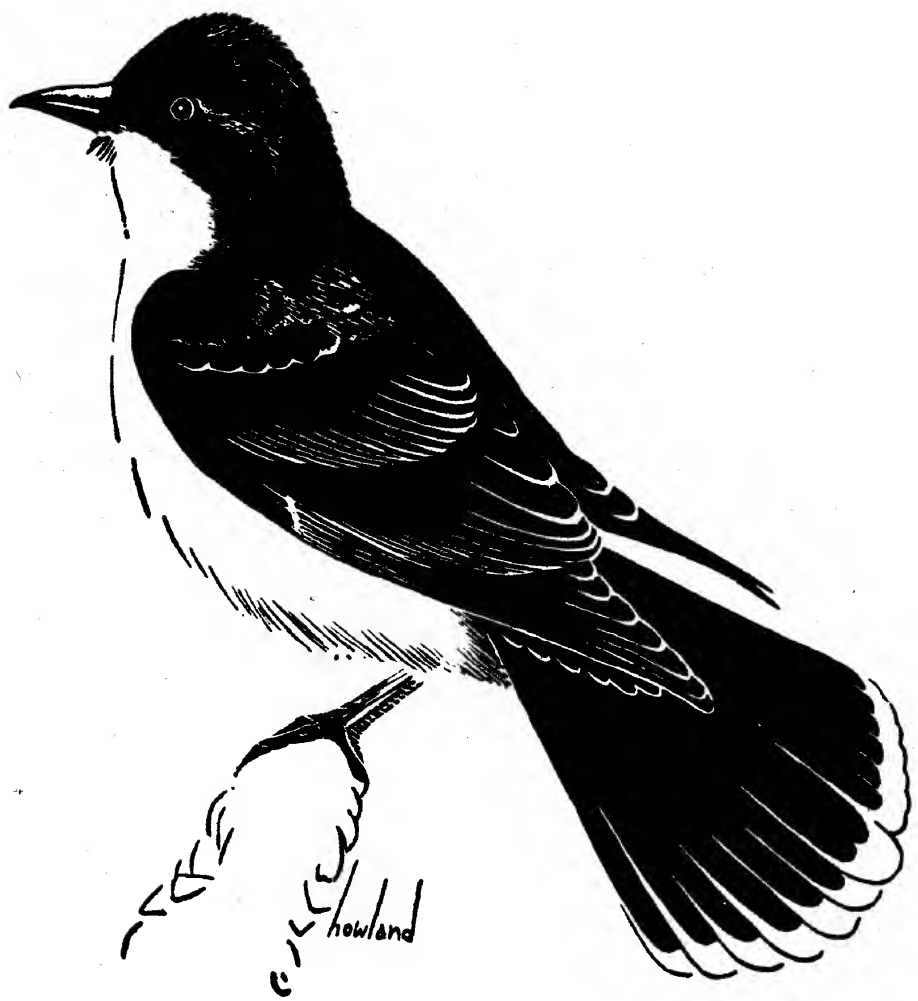


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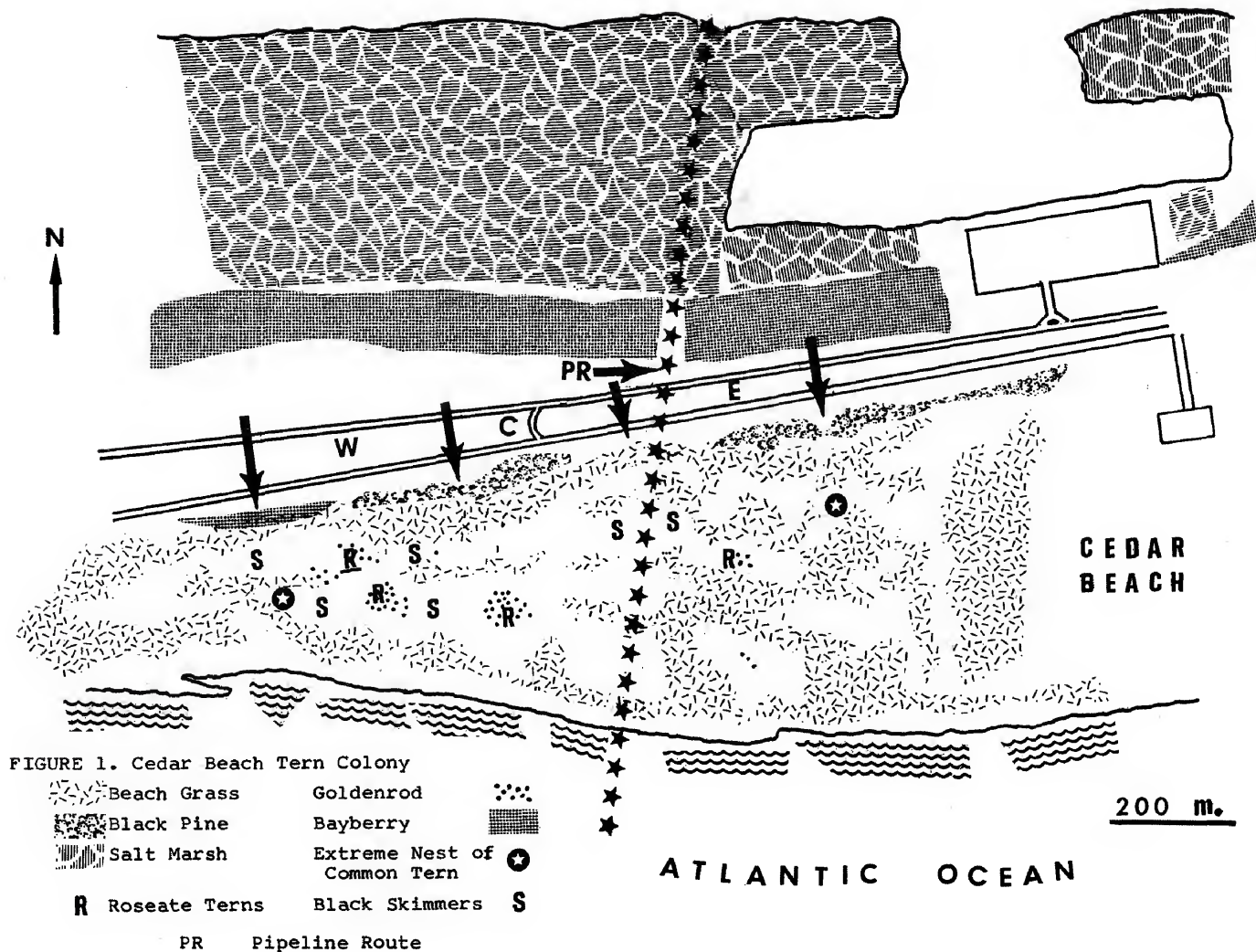
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WATERBIRD COLONIES OF LONG ISLAND, NEW YORK

3. CEDAR BEACH TERNERY

MICHAEL GOCHFELD

The tern colony at Cedar Beach, about 6 miles south of Babylon, occupies a wide interdune area on the south shore barrier beach in western Suffolk County, New York (40° 38' N; 73° 22' W). The colony covers an area of about 12 hectares (ca. 32 acres) and extends from 200 to 1400 meters west of the Cedar Beach (Town of Babylon) recreation facilities. A tern colony has existed in this vicinity since at least the mid-1930's (Bull 1964); the present site was first occupied in 1957 and has been in use continuously since 1968. The estimated breeding populations for recent years (always listed as pairs of birds or numbers of nests) of Common, Roseate and Least Terns (*Sterna hirundo*, *S. dougallii*, *S. albifrons*) and Black Skimmers (*Rynchops niger*), are indicated in Table 1.

DESCRIPTION OF AREA

Figure 1 is a map of the Cedar Beach colony showing major features such as the highway, ocean, and inner and outer dunes. Major vegetation types are shown schematically and the locations of skimmer and Roseate Tern clusters in 1975 are indicated. Dominant vegetation includes Beach Grass (*Ammophila breviligulata*) and Seaside Goldenrod (*Solidago sempervirens*). There is very little other vegetation in the colony. The north edge of the colony bordering the road contains ornamental plantings of Bayberry (*Myrica pensylvanica*) and Japanese Black Pine (*Pinus thunbergi*) among other species.

Plant succession in the interdune area is similar to that discussed by Ranwell (1972), and its progression at Cedar Beach has been studied in sample plots both near and away from nesting areas. During a six-year period, plots subject to fertilization by tern excreta have not had noticeably more rapid plant succession than plots not used by the birds; a detailed study of this will be presented separately.

The berm beyond the outer dune varies in width from month to month and year to year and is believed to be undergoing rapid erosion. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers periodically constructs a pipeline for its beach nourishment project; sand dredged out of Fire Island Inlet is deposited along the beach from Gilgo to Oak Beach.

This deposition attempts to compensate for the enhanced rate of erosion due in part to construction of the jetty at Democrat Point. The outer beach often undergoes dramatic seasonal changes. In 1975, the distance from high tide line to the base of the outer dune changed from 11 meters on 20 March to 28 meters on 15 May, and to 42 meters on 1 July. Under such unusual circumstances as the high water following Hurricane Agnes in late June, 1972, the outer beach may be completely inundated. Rarely have any terns nested on the outer beach.

The outer dune, in some places rising 3 to 4 meters above the berm and 2 meters above the interdune area, affords a large measure of security to the nesting birds by keeping out high water and beach vehicles. Since I began regular monitoring of the Cedar Beach colony in 1970, none of the main colony area has suffered flooding, and only a small cluster of nests in a depression near the southeast corner of the colony has been lost due to high water. Flooding is a major cause of destruction of tern colonies (Austin 1940) and the security of Cedar Beach with respect to flooding is an important feature.

Although psammophilic (sand-loving) plants such as Sea Rocket (*Cakile edentulata*) and Sandwort (*Arenaria peploides*) are widespread on the outer beach from Fire Island Inlet to Jones Inlet, at Cedar Beach the vegetation of the outer dune consists almost entirely of Beach Grass. Vegetation cover was estimated in 10 one-meter plots on the outer dune and ranged from 5 to 40% (mean 17.5%). Grass is densest near the crest of the outer dune, where it covers about 70% of the ground.

The width of the interdune area varies from about 80 to almost 200 meters. Although it is mostly level, there are several secondary dune systems rising as much as 1.5 meters above the main level. The substrate is sand and shell, generally coarser-grained than on the outer beach. Two large stands of goldenrod occur in the central and western parts of the colony, the western one containing about 71 bushes varying from 20 to 115 cm in height (excluding flowering stalks). These bushes provide the main nest sites for Roseate Terns.

The inner dune rises as much as 4 meters above the interdune area. It is more stable than the outer dune and supports Bayberry and other plants in addition to Beach Grass. No terns nest on the inner dune, but after hatching many young birds seek shelter in the vegetation there.

In Figure 1 the colony is divided into eastern, central and western

thirds by the four parallel arrows. Common Terns nest throughout the ternery, but the center density has shifted from the eastern third (1970-1973) to the western third (1974-1975). Black Skimmers usually form two to four clusters of 20 to 50 nests each in various parts of the colony. In 1975 these clusters were all in the central and western parts of the colony. Roseate Terns (see Figure 1) usually have clusters of 5-25 nests in both the eastern and western thirds, with a few scattered nests in goldenrod in the central portion. Least Terns nested from 1968 to 1974 in the relatively bare area in the southern part of the western and central portions; in 1975 they moved about 1 km to the west, apparently joining with a smaller group of birds from Gilgo Beach.

Although Black Skimmers are considered birds of open, unvegetated beaches (cf. Bent 1921, Pettingill 1937), on Long Island they frequently nest close to vegetation (see also Stone 1932). The determining factor seems to be the presence of Common Terns. Within tern colonies, skimmers nest in barer areas, but they are apparently more tolerant of vegetation than one would infer from the literature. At Cedar Beach the dispersion of Roseate Terns is most influenced by the presence of goldenrod, under which 45 of the 49 nests (92%) were built in 1975. Other nests were built in clumps of Beach Grass. In other seasons some nests have been built under boxes or pieces of driftwood. The tendency of Roseate Terns to nest under objects is well documented (Austin jr. 1929, Austin 1944, Bent 1921, Cooper *et al.* 1970, Jones 1906).

CEDAR BEACH IN RELATION TO OTHER MAJOR TERNERIES

On Long Island, aggregations of terns and skimmers exceeding 1500 pairs occur at relatively few locations. The large colony at Breezy Point in Brooklyn was eliminated by vandalism. The West End Beach colony, subject to much disturbance, (see Gochfeld and Ford 1974) grew to nearly 2500 pairs of Common Terns and about 150 pairs of Black Skimmers in 1975. On the south shore of eastern Long Island large terneries have existed at Shinnecock Inlet and at Moriches Inlet. The latter has been estimated to have as many as 6000 pairs of Common Terns (1963, Audubon Field Notes) but has repeatedly been devastated by predation and human disturbance. In a helicopter survey (see Buckley 1975) F. G. and P. A. Buckley and I estimated about 600-800 pairs of Common Terns on Laine Island in Shinnecock Inlet and 1300-1600 pairs of Common Terns in Moriches

Inlet, mainly on West Inlet Island. Great Gull Island, the largest ternery on Long Island, had an estimated 2500 pairs of Common and 900 pairs of Roseate Terns in 1975 (H. Hays pers. comm.). Cedar Beach, from an extrapolation of nest counts, had 2500-2600 pairs of Common Terns, and is perhaps the largest aggregation of this species in the state. Fifty pairs of Roseate Terns were present in 1975; this is the westernmost nesting site for this species, which appears to have a tenuous foothold on the Atlantic Coast (Nisbet 1973). About 90% of the Atlantic Coast population breeds on Long Island or in Massachusetts. The 155 pairs of Black Skimmers nesting at Cedar Beach form the largest aggregation of this species on Long Island, comprising about 35% of the island's skimmer population. Not only is Cedar Beach one of the largest terneries on Long Island, but it has grown steadily over the past six years (Table 1). This has not been true for the other large tern colonies mentioned above.

Cedar Beach also is unique in its natural beach habitat. The terns at West End Beach nest in an area consisting partly of landfill and ornamental plantings; most of the plants identified there are not natural members of the beach community (Gochfeld MSa). The Great Gull Island colony (described in detail by Heilbrun 1971) has numerous exotic plant species including various Compositae and shrubs, and much of the colony site is influenced by the stone remains of old Fort Michie. Frequent clearing of vegetation has been necessary to keep the island suitable for terns. Terneries at Shinnecock and Moriches Inlets have usually been on low-lying islands behind the barrier beach. These resemble Cedar Beach in having largely natural vegetation but are much more subject to flooding and erosion.

SEWER OUTFALL LINE

Figure 1 shows the proposed route of the sewage outfall line from the treatment facility of the Suffolk County Southwest Sewer District No. 3. Alternative routes east of the colony have been suggested by some environmentalists but have been discarded by Suffolk County. A route to the west of the colony, involving the least deflection from the present route and probably the least environmental impact on the barrier beach, has not been seriously considered. Under the original plan of Suffolk County most of the colony area to the east of the route would be used as a staging area for assembling the pipe. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, while approv-

ing Route No. 1, has forbidden use of the colony site as a staging area and has limited construction to the period of September 15 to April 15. The county officials are currently (as of March 1976) contesting these restrictions. The arguments involved in the pipeline dispute have been summarized elsewhere (Gochfeld 1976). Suffice it to say that since the Cedar Beach ternery is one of the largest, most secure and most productive tern colonies on Long Island and in the eastern United States, its preservation at the present site should be given high priority.

HISTORY OF RECENT OCCUPATION AT THE PRESENT SITE

In July 1968 Dr. Robert O. Paxton discovered a colony of about 50 pairs of Least Terns at Cedar Beach. In June 1969 he estimated about 200-250 pairs of Least Terns there; this colony was augmented by the arrival that July of about 200 pairs of Common Terns, which had presumably been unsuccessful in earlier nesting attempts elsewhere.

In 1970 Common Terns arrived at Cedar Beach in late May, and since then have been the dominant species in the colony. Black Skimmers and Roseate Terns also joined the colony in June 1970. Since then a mid-season influx of nesting birds has also been detected each year. Movement of birds from one colony to another after an initial nesting failure has been well documented (cf. Austin jr. 1932, 1933). In addition, young terns nesting for the first time usually join pre-existing colonies and commence nesting about one month later than most adults.

SEASONALITY AND PHENOLOGY

On western Long Island the first Common Tern eggs appear between 13 and 26 May. Warm, clear weather seems to induce early laying or perhaps the converse conditions inhibit early laying. However, in 1975 cold, wet weather prevailed into the first week of May, but laying was earlier than in any of the preceding 12 seasons, perhaps because of persistent fair weather after 8 May. This anomalous early laying indicates that factors underlying the phenology of tern reproduction are still unknown.

In seasons when early breeding success is high there is little re-nesting. In such seasons most chicks have fledged by 10 July (after about 50 days for incubation and pre-flight periods) and the site may be abandoned by the end of that month. In most seasons, however, between 25% and 75% of a colony is likely to re-nest after initial

TABLE 1. Numbers of nests or pairs at Cedar Beach colony (1969-1975).

Year	COMMON TERN	ROSEATE TERN	LEAST TERN	BLACK SKIMMER	PIPING PLOVER
1969	0 (50 late) ^a	—	ca200	—	???
1970	1145±25	90–100	30±3	45–50	6–7
1971	1640±50	60–70	120±5	50–60	???
1972	1175±25	50–60	35–36	100 ^c	5
1973	1450±50	25	24–25	120±10	4
1974	2143–2250	24	61–65	78	4
1975	2500–2600	42–55	(23) ^b	150–155	2

a = about 50 pairs of Common Terns arrived late in season to nest (R. O. Paxton pers. comm.)

b = Least Terns nested about 1 km west of colony in 1975.

c = Bull (1974)

TABLE 2. Comparison of earliest egg-laying dates for Common Terns at West End Beach and Cedar Beach, Long Island. The two colonies are about 12 miles (19 km) apart. [All dates are in May.]

YEAR	WEST END BEACH	CEDAR BEACH	MAXIMUM DIFFERENCE
1970	19–22	18–20	1 day
1971	21–23	16–19	5 days
1972	21–22	18–19	3 days
1973	21–22	17–18	4 days
1974	16–17	15–16	1 day
1975	14	11–12	3 days

failures. In such species as Herring Gull, (*Larus argentatus*), chicks hatching from late nests have a lower probability of survival (Nisbet and Drury 1972). The same is believed true for Common Terns (Austin 1944). Cohorts of tern chicks banded as downy young in August consistently have a higher local mortality, judging from the number of banded birds recovered at or near the colony, than do cohorts banded in June or July (Gochfeld MSb). But some seasons half or more of the total young may come from re-nesting (Austin 1946, Gochfeld and Ford 1974). This estimate, however, is based only on birds surviving to fledging (about four weeks of age), and does not consider subsequent mortality of such fledglings. The chief limitation for terns is that they must learn to obtain food by diving (LeCroy 1972), and it is probably advantageous for them to become proficient at fishing before migration begins. However, in some species, such as the Royal Tern (*Thalasseus maximus*), parental care may continue on the wintering grounds (Ashmole and Tovar 1968).

At Cedar Beach late nesting adults include late arrivals as well as birds known to have failed in earlier nesting attempts there or at other colonies. The results of trapping such late arrivals, a few of which had been banded previously, indicate that both young birds and adults from other colonies are involved. The fact that young birds nest later than established adults has been noted previously (Austin sr. 1946, 1947; Cooper *et al.* 1970). In all seasons from 1970 to 1975, some nesting attempts have been made in August, probably by birds that had already failed twice, and unfledged but apparently normal juvenals are sometimes found in September. Such late nesting is even more frequent in Black Skimmer, and in several seasons unfledged juvenals have been found in September (pers. obs., D. B. Ford, pers. comm.). Ford found a healthy but still flightless young skimmer on 8 October 1971 at Cedar Beach.

The viability of young of late nestings depends largely on how much experience they can gain prior to separation from the adults. Vermeer (1963) mentions that young gulls from artificially large clutches are more likely to be found on garbage dumps than are young from normal clutches. Presumably the same option is open to late-fledgling gulls, which have only to locate a nearby dump. The relatively new practice of plowing over dumps on Long Island may greatly reduce this option. It would be interesting to determine why Black Skimmers are more likely than Common Terns to re-nest late in the season. I have seen small groups of young skimmers engage in

skimming within four days after fledging. Although still partly dependent on adults, skimmers probably have an easier time mastering their fishing technique than do terns, and therefore fledging late would be less of a disadvantage. This may account in part for the regularity with which skimmers engage in repeated re-nesting. One marked female skimmer is known to have produced three unsuccessful clutches at Cedar Beach by 2 August 1971, and to have initiated yet another nesting attempt. It is also possible that skimmers have a significantly higher failure rate than do the terns, a matter that will be considered separately.

EGG-LAYING SYNCHRONY ON LONG ISLAND

Despite the large amount of field work done on Long Island, there is relatively little comparative information on the onset of laying in different colonies. Wolk and Bull (1967) found a Herring Gull colony on Gardiner's Island to be about two weeks ahead of one at Captree. In 1966 H. Hays (in Cooper *et al.* 1970) compared dates of laying at Great Gull Island, Jones Beach and Jamaica Bay and found that laying had begun within a day or two at all three colonies.

Table 2 shows the estimated date of first layings at Cedar Beach and at West End Beach. The former is generally two to five days earlier than the latter, although the two are only 15 miles apart. In 1975 the ternery at Shinnecock Inlet had Common Tern and Black Skimmer chicks estimated to be four and one days old respectively on 11 June. This indicated that hatching occurred two to four days earlier there than at Cedar Beach. The gradient in onset of nesting varies from year to year and from species to species, but whenever such a gradient has been found, the more eastern colonies have had earlier nesting. How this relates to east-west climatic gradients remains to be studied.

FLOODING

Many species nesting in the littoral zone run the risk of flood damage to nests. Austin (1940) considered this the most important natural cause of nest destruction and colony failure and noted that suitable high nesting area is an important attribute of a secure colony. Numerous cases of colony destruction by flooding have been reported for several species (e.g., Austin jr. 1929, 1933; Mackay 1898; Gochfeld 1974; Bongiorno 1970).

At Cedar Beach the interdune area has been entirely secure from

flooding. A low-lying basin not protected by an outer dune occasionally had a few Common Tern nests, and in late June 1972 about 40 nests in this basin were flooded out. Terns have not nested there subsequently. This represents the only loss of nests due to flooding at Cedar Beach. At Gilgo Beach, only 2 km west of Cedar Beach, where a few Least Terns nest on the berm, high tides and flooding eliminated the whole colony in one season and more than half of it in another, during the five years this colony was in existence.

PREDATION AND OTHER DISTURBANCES

Humans, dogs, feral cats, Norway Rats (*Rattus norvegicus*) and Short-eared Owls (*Asio flammeus*) are known to prey on terns at Cedar Beach. Other potential predators occurring on the barrier beach are Red Foxes (*Vulpes fulva*), Long-tailed Weasels (*Mustela frenata*), Herring Gulls, Great Black-backed Gulls (*Larus marinus*), Black-crowned Night Herons (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) and Fish Crows (*Corvus ossifragus*). The gulls and Fish Crows are fairly common and probably do prey on birds there on rare occasions, but this has never been observed during the hundreds of hours we spent in or near the colony, when disturbance of the terns would have facilitated predation. Both gulls nest at Captree State Park, only five miles to the east, and flocks frequently rest on the outer beach not far from the colony, but actual predation has not been witnessed. Common Grackles (*Quiscalus quiscula*) and Red-winged Blackbirds (*Agelaius phoeniceus*), both potential predators on tern eggs (e.g., Pessino 1968), nest in ornamental pine plantings and natural vegetation on the barrier beach, and are frequently seen near the colony. I have observed Red-winged Blackbirds damaging tern eggs at West End Beach, but not yet at Cedar Beach.

A feral cat was seen once in the colony but the occurrence or extent of damage was not known. However, a cat was largely responsible for eliminating a small colony of Least Terns on western Fire Island in 1973 (D. B. Ford pers. comm.). The Norway Rat is a very important predator on terns (Austin 1948), but its impact at Cedar Beach is negligible. A few rats live in the ornamental vegetation along the parkway, and rat caches of eggs and occasionally of chicks have been found near the northern edge of the colony, but the rat is clearly a much less important predator at Cedar Beach than at West End Beach, where it finds more suitable habitat.

A pair of Short-eared Owls nests in the salt marsh north of Cedar

Beach (W. Post pers. comm.) and the owls are occasionally seen over the marsh at dawn and at dusk. On one occasion an owl was seen over the colony. On some days "epidemics" of decapitated adult terns indicate the work of an owl (cf. Nisbet 1975), and this is the only owl species known to live on the barrier beach during the breeding season. Great Horned Owls (*Bubo virginianus*), important predators at tern colonies in Massachusetts (Austin 1940, Nisbet 1975), do not occur near Cedar Beach; the nearest known birds are at Heckscher State Park, 10 miles to the northeast.

CHICK DESTRUCTION BY TERNS

Mortality due to attacks on wandering young terns by aggressive territorial adults is often higher than mortality due to predators. This phenomenon has been noted by various authors (e.g., Palmer 1941, Austin jr. 1929, Austin 1946).

Individual terns apparently differ considerably in their aggressiveness toward wandering chicks. In one case at Cedar Beach I observed an adult kill two chicks and severely peck two others that moved through its territory or crouched next to a grass clump. A careful check of this territory revealed 11 dead or dying chicks with characteristic puncture wounds about the head. Such aggression, as well as actual cannibalism, is well known also for the Herring Gull (e.g., Parsons 1971). There is remarkably little quantitative information on the circumstances leading to such mortality. Adult aggression seems likely to be greater in dense colonies, where the likelihood of a chick wandering near such an aggressive adult is also likely to be greater. Although Common Tern chicks normally crouch and hide in vegetation in or near the parental territory, the presence of people walking through a colony, and particularly of banders lifting chicks from hiding places and handling them, can greatly increase the amount and distance of wandering and may increase the mortality due directly to aggressive adults.

HUMAN DISTURBANCE

Ultimately, disturbance by humans is the most frequent and severe factor causing mortality and reduction of productivity among colonial birds (Austin 1940, 1946; Buckley, Buckley and Gochfeld in prep.). Human activities operate on several levels. Humans usurp potential nesting areas for construction of houses or recreation facilities. In 1972, for example, the Long Island State Park Commission built a parking lot on Fire Island right on the site of a large Least

Tern colony. In the early 1950's construction of highways caused a large ternery at Jones Beach to shift about 2 km to the west, and less than a decade later construction of parking lots and bath houses again displaced this colony. The Cedar Beach colony has thus far escaped such disturbance, although it is now threatened with the construction of a pipeline. Like erosion and vegetation overgrowth, which are reversible or cyclic phenomena, construction activity not only eliminates habitat, but in the case of the dredge spoil islands, new habitat is created as well (Buckley and Buckley 1974).

Human disturbance of the environment includes the release of chemical contaminants, the scattering of refuse that may be hazardous to birds (Gochfeld 1973), and the changing of natural population equilibria. The accumulation of edible refuse in large garbage dumps has apparently facilitated the unprecedented population growth of Great Black-backed and Herring Gulls. Gull populations have apparently stabilized in New England (Drury and Kadlec 1974), but on Long Island they are still increasing (Buckley *et al.* 1975). Gulls are potential predators on smaller species such as terns, but their chief effect is to pre-empt tern colonies and prevent terns from reoccupying formerly used sites (e.g., Nisbet 1973). In 1975, a small group of Herring Gulls began nesting on Alder Island, in Jones Inlet, which led to the total failure of the ternery there.

Of greater concern in most cases is direct human disturbance, including vandalism, interruption of incubation and eggging. Although tern eggs are only occasionally (less than once per season) collected for food, the impact of eggging can be great indeed. Interference with nesting activities occurs often when bathers or picnickers settle in a colony and prevent terns from incubating or feeding their young. This is not likely to occur at a large ternery, where aggressive defense by adults keeps out most human intruders, but it is believed to be an important factor in the elimination of smaller terneries on islands in the inland waterway. Vandalism includes shooting of adult birds, destruction of eggs, and the use of beach vehicles in a colony (see Davis 1965). The elimination of the Wantagh colony (Gochfeld 1974) was caused by a combination of flooding, casual interference, and vandalism.

At Cedar Beach such incidents have been infrequent. Vehicles have entered the colony on several occasions during a six year period, mainly between 1970 and 1972 when the colony was less dense and well-established than in 1975. R. O. Paxton blocked off beach ve-

hicle access points with wood, effectively eliminating access for a two year period until the barriers were broken down. In 1975 the park commission erected a drift fence across one of the access points. Formerly many people parked cars along the highway adjacent to the colony and crossed it to swim at the beach. As the density and aggressiveness of the terns and the attentiveness of the parkway police force have increased this source of interference has become negligible. In addition, Suffolk County police patrol the beaches in jeeps and helicopters and help reduce vandalism. I have never found evidence of egging at Cedar Beach, but vandalism—shooting or smashing of eggs in some nests—has occurred on at least three occasions. The effectiveness of the police protection afforded the colony is largely an individual matter, but ornithologists visiting the colonies have encouraged the police to take an interest in the birds and their nests, thereby enhancing their protection.

Since there are no parking facilities very close to the Cedar Beach colony, the frequency of human intrusion and vandalism is much lower than at the West End Beach and Captree colonies.

DISTURBANCE BY BIRD WATCHERS AND BANDERS

Cedar Beach, although near nesting areas of the Black Rail (*Laterallus jamaicensis*) and Chuck-will's-widow (*Caprimulgus carolinensis*), does not attract much attention from bird watchers. Photographers find gulls and terns much easier to photograph at nearby Captree and West End Beach, where birds can be observed at close range from a car. The main attraction of Cedar Beach is that it is the westernmost breeding locality for Roseate Terns on Long Island; bird watchers occasionally enter the colony to add this species to one list or another.

Bird study activity, an important potential disturbance, has involved the marking of nests and the monitoring of hatching and survival. Banding of young has been conducted annually but the emphasis on banding has not been great and usually only 300-1000 young are banded there in any season. In most years special attention has been devoted to Roseate and Least Terns and to Black Skimmers so that a greater proportion of the young of these species than of Common Terns have been banded.

To minimize disturbance, work is usually confined to mild days, or to brief periods on hotter, sunnier days, and one moves frequently from one area of a colony to another, so that disturbance in any sub-

unit lasts no more than one hour. The bulk of activities involving prolonged presence in the colony—nest marking, adult trapping, mapping—are conducted during the incubation period, when disturbance has less effect than it does after hatching. These and other less specific precautions minimize but do not eliminate adverse impact on the birds (Buckley, Buckley and Gochfeld in prep.).

OTHER NESTING SPECIES

The Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*), characteristic of the outer beaches, has declined markedly in recent years. At Short Beach and West End, where 13 nests were found in 1971, only four pairs were found in 1975. At Cedar Beach and Gilgo Beach, where an additional 10-12 pairs nested in 1972, only four pairs, two of those within the Cedar Beach colony, nested in 1975. Whether this signifies a long term trend is unclear. Increasing use of beaches and of beach vehicles is an important hazard to this species. Wilcox (1959), who conducted a 20-year banding study of Piping Plovers on Long Island, found that they were rare in the late 1920's, increased to about 4 pairs per mile in the 1930's, and declined in the post-World War II period due to housing and human disturbance. On the outer beaches Piping Plovers may nest alone or in association with Least Terns. At Cedar Beach the few pairs present often nest within 3 meters of one or more tern nests. Terns seem to tolerate the plovers.

American Oystercatchers (*Haematopus palliatus*), have increased dramatically on Long Island since 1957, when L. Wilcox found the first nest on Gardiner's Island (Post and Raynor 1964). The 1975 aerial survey estimated over 50 pairs of oystercatchers on Long Island, most of them on marshy islands in Great South Bay. Almost none were found on the barrier beach itself; the only nest I have seen there was one containing three eggs at Cedar Beach in 1972. The entire clutch disappeared without a trace, possibly because of predation or vandalism.

OTHER VERTEBRATES

The Cottontail Rabbit (*Sylvilagus floridanus*) and the Meadow Vole (*Microtus pennsylvanicus*) are very common on the entire barrier beach. The rabbit occupies brushy areas and artificial plantings along the highway and the vole prefers mats formed by dead stems of Beach Grass. Fowler's Toad (*Bufo fowleri*) is abundant on the barrier beach, and while individuals are frequently active in the colony,

most occur in pine groves on sandy soil. The Diamond-back Terrapin (*Malaclemys terrapin*), now rare on Long Island, seems to be increasing in the vicinity of Cedar Beach. The face of the inner dune on the northern margin of the colony is typical of terrapin nesting habitat (Burger and Montevecchi 1975), and two individual terrapins have been seen there in five years. Terrapins live in brackish waters behind the barrier beach and must cross the salt marsh and highway to find habitat suitable for nesting. During 1975, four large terrapins were found dead on the highway between Oak Beach and Gilgo. A 15 cm high cement curb along the median divider provides a barrier that prevents them from crossing the highway along much of the beach. Cedar Beach is one of the places where crossing is possible.

INSECTS AND TERNS

Austin (1929), Jones (1906) and others mention that newly hatched and hatching tern chicks are frequently eaten by small ants that infest tern colonies. On Long Island I have several times found that ants enter pipping eggs and attack the live chicks within, but since ants readily enter eggs in which chicks have died during hatching, the extent to which ant predation is a significant factor during hatching is unknown. Once hatched, healthy chicks can usually move if their nest becomes infested by ants, as is likely to happen if there is a dead sibling within it.

At Cedar Beach, a black ant (*Lasius neoniger*) is abundant and feeds on dead chicks; several weak but living chicks were bitten by this ant, thus perhaps hastening their demise. The Pavement Ant (*Tetramorium caespitum*) was an important scavenger of dead birds at West End Beach but was not found at Cedar Beach.

At Cedar Beach and elsewhere goldenrod plants are frequently attacked by the chrysomelid beetle (*Trirhabda canadensis*). This insect lays its eggs in masses that overwinter on the ground. The larvae hatch in early June and eat goldenrod leaves. In 1975, several patches of goldenrod at Cedar Beach were entirely defoliated, and Roseate Terns nesting beneath them either abandoned clutches or attempted to lead chicks off to areas with protective cover. A similar event occurred in Massachusetts in the same year (Nisbet pers. comm.).

THE FUTURE

Large tern colonies have proportionately better survival and pro-

ductivity in most circumstances than small ones (Austin 1946, Gochfeld and Ford 1974). Such a colony as Cedar Beach is not only a secure breeding location to which terns can repair from less suitable sites, but also serves as a nucleus for additional breeding colonies which may become established elsewhere on Long Island. The Cedar Beach colony plays a particularly important role in maintaining Black Skimmer populations on Long Island. As more and more areas have become unsuitable for various reasons, terns have been forced to nest in marginal habitats where human disturbance, rats, and flooding prevent adequate reproduction. Many Common Terns have recently begun breeding in salt marshes on Long Island, and available evidence indicates that such colonies usually fail entirely. The history of tern colonies in Europe and North America indicates that the Common and Roseate Terns are not marsh-nesting species, and the fact that they now seek salt marshes for nesting is alarming. It suggests that they simply have nowhere else to go.

Cedar Beach is therefore an important refuge for nesting terns. Nesting density is still low in much of the colony, and some of the available area is not in use at all. Compared with many other Long Island colonies the vegetational succession is at a very early stage, indicating that it can continue to be a productive colony until at least the end of the current millenium.

If a major disturbance at Cedar Beach causes the birds to abandon the site, one can predict that the birds will attempt to either join one of the other large colonies or to settle on salt marsh or spoil bank islands, where their future will be in jeopardy. The large colonies at West End and Moriches offer some hope, but the West End colony is almost entirely saturated and it is not likely that it could hold even 500 additional pairs. The Moriches colony has lately had very low productivity because of predation. Interchange of birds between Cedar Beach and Great Gull Island is, for unknown reasons, a rare event, so it seems unlikely that birds forced to leave Cedar Beach would settle at Gull Island.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Numerous friends and students have participated in field work at

Cedar Beach. Robert Gochfeld, Joy Grafton and Danielle Ponsolle were the most frequent participants. I thank also David Ewert, Michel, Suzanne and Georges Kleinbaum, Linda and Deborah Gochfeld, and Myrna Jacobson for assistance. Darrel B. Ford carried on a large part of the project of monitoring the colony and marking birds. Small quantities of funds were obtained from the Society of Sigma Xi, the Frank M. Chapman Fund, and an NIH Biomedical Grant to Queens College. I thank Max K. Hecht for the loan of equipment which greatly facilitated studies in the colony.

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THE LEGAL PROTECTION OF BIRDS

WARREN F. COOKE

Is it against the law "to kill a mockingbird"? What about a loquacious catbird? A noisy woodpecker?

Think twice, for the answer, as many people are surprised to learn, is "yes." The reason is that these birds are members of families that are covered by certain international conventions on migratory birds to which the U.S. is a party; and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, the Federal law which implements these international agreements, makes it a crime to harm the birds. In addition, the birds are "protected wildlife" under New York State law.

The Federal Act, and the related regulations of Department of the Interior, make it generally illegal to kill, pursue, hunt, capture or possess migratory birds, or even to attempt to do so. They also forbid taking their eggs. New York's Environmental Conservation Law prohibits killing—or even "disturbing, harrying or worrying"—any "protected bird," which is defined to include all wild birds except the House Sparrow, Starling, pigeons and psittacine birds (parrots) "existing in a wild state." The net result is that most of our songbirds—including cardinals, robins, wrens, swallows, woodpeckers, tanagers, warblers, chickadees and hummingbirds—as well as most other birds (including shorebirds, raptors and others) are protected by the majesty of Federal and State law.

Violation of the Federal Act is a misdemeanor, carrying the penalty of a \$500 fine, up to six months of imprisonment, or both. Violation of the New York law is likewise a misdemeanor, also punishable by various fines and imprisonment.

Although the States have generally been free to regulate the taking of birds, Federal law arrived at its present state by a difficult road.

In ancient England, the right to hunt birds was viewed as the personal prerogative of the sovereign himself. However, after the granting of the Magna Carta in 1215 and the Charter of the Forest in 1225, the "property" right to wild birds, although still vested in the sovereign, existed for the use and benefit of the people. This principle became the common law of the American colonies, and then of their successors, the States of the United States. Numerous U.S. cases hold that wild creatures are owned by the several States as "trustee" or for the benefit of their citizens. New York law expressly

provides that the State of New York "owns" all wildlife in the State. The State retains "title" (for regulatory purposes) even as to those wild creatures lawfully reduced to possession.

State regulation was generally insufficient, however, to prevent hunting pressure on numerous species of shorebirds and others from seriously threatening their existence. The Federal Government first attempted to protect migratory birds in 1913. The Department of Agriculture Appropriation Act of that year provided that all "migratory game and insectivorous birds which in their northern and southern migrations pass through or do not remain permanently the entire year within the borders of any state or territory, shall hereafter be deemed to be within the custody and protection of the United States," and authorized the Department of Agriculture to prevent their destruction. However, the courts held this law unconstitutional, invoking the old common law that wild birds are owned by the States in their sovereign capacity as representatives of the people, and not by the Federal Government. Therefore Article 4 of the Federal Constitution (enabling Congress to legislate concerning "property belonging to the United States") did not apply and the Federal attempt failed.

The legal situation was altered on December 8, 1916, when a treaty was proclaimed by President Wilson between the United States and Great Britain (which was then in possession of Canada). The treaty recognized that many migratory birds "are of great value as a source of food or in destroying insects which are injurious" and stated that the U.S. and His Majesty the King of England were "desirous of saving from indiscriminate slaughter and of insuring the preservation of such migratory birds as are either useful to man or are harmless." Accordingly, the agreement provided for the establishment by each country of "close seasons" and other forms of protection for most birds, including certain designated ornithological families and also all "perching birds which feed entirely or chiefly on insects." On July 3, 1918, the first version of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act was passed to implement the terms of the treaty. This time the attempt was upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court: declaring that "a national interest of very nearly the first magnitude is involved." Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes held that the law was made in pursuance of a valid treaty, and therefore could be upheld under the Constitution's treaty-making power.

Subsequently a 1936 treaty between the U.S. and Mexico and a

1972 treaty between the U.S. and Japan tightened up birds' legal "rights." Federal law sets the standard: State law may be *more* protective of birds than the Federal law, but is always superseded by Federal law.

The legal prohibitions on harming birds are by no means absolute. As in other areas of law, the exceptions may be as important as the rule.

The principal exception, of course, under both Federal and New York law, is for the hunting of ducks, geese, rails and certain other "game" birds, which is permitted within stated limits and pursuant to appropriate licenses. Certain *methods* of hunting are prohibited, such as hunting from sinkboxes, the use of traps, machine guns or electrically amplified birdcalls, baiting with grain and various other practices. Other exceptions in the Federal regulations generally relate to subsistence hunting (for example, Snowy Owls may be killed in Alaska for food) or to the special destructiveness of a particular species (such as Purple Gallinules damaging rice crops in Louisiana or Scrub Jays damaging nut crops in Oregon or Washington). New York law permits the owner of any crop, or his employee, to kill Red-winged Blackbirds, Common Grackles and cowbirds during the months of June through October if the birds are destroying the crop. There are various other specialized exceptions. A few birds, such as grouse and pheasant, are not covered by the Federal Regulations at all.

Great Horned Owls were removed only in 1974 from the Federal list of birds which could be killed for depredation reasons. Similarly, it became illegal under New York law, effective July 1, 1975, to kill a Great Horned Owl or a hawk, even if thought to be "harassing poultry."

Federal and State permits may be granted to authorize the banding or marking of birds, scientific collection, and certain other limited activities. A serious loophole in current Federal protection is the absence of meaningful control on falconry; Federal law permits the taking of raptors in any State to the extent authorized by that State's law, subject to the limit that no more than three raptors may be taken from the wild per year by any one individual. But State controls on falconry are generally lax. In New York the sport is permitted pursuant to a license, requiring payment of a small fee and the possession of a hunting license or a combination hunting and fishing license. Bald and Golden Eagles and Peregrine Falcons may

not be used; but otherwise the restrictions are few. In view of the nationwide decline in many hawk and owl populations, this loophole should be closed by affirmative legislation.

Miscellaneous laws in addition to what is outlined above contribute to the protection of birds. For example, both Bald and Golden Eagles are protected by the Bald Eagle Protection Act. The Endangered Species Acts, first enacted in 1966, give special protection to some fifty endangered species of U.S. birds, such as the Peregrine Falcon, Whooping Crane, Everglade Kite, Red-cockaded Woodpecker, Brown Pelican and many others less well known. Since the Federal Government has the power to regulate activities taking place on or in proximity to Federal land, certain Federal laws and regulations, such as those relating to the National Wildlife Refuge system, protect birds further, both directly and by protecting their habitat. The Lacey Act, a Federal law first passed in 1900, buttresses State law by prohibiting the transportation in interstate or foreign commerce of wildlife taken in violation of State Law.

New York law permits a person to capture and assist a bird that is "in distress" (*i.e.*, that is apparently unable to survive in the wild and thus requires human assistance); it should be noted, however, that the law requires notification of such capture as soon as possible to a conservation officer by telephone, with written confirmation of the capture to the conservation officer within twenty-four hours after the notification. In addition, the law requires that a veterinarian's certificate be obtained within forty-eight hours after the capture, to the effect that the creature is "in distress."

It is worth noting that under New York's Environmental Conservation Law, the Department of Environmental Conservation has the power, after a public hearing, to grant protection to any wildlife in addition to that already afforded by the law if ten or more New York citizens file with the Department a petition signed by them (giving their addresses) stating the grounds on which such protection is necessary.

Communications on enforcement of the Federal Act should be addressed to the Special Agent in Charge, Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, Hangar 11, Room 1-49, John F. Kennedy Airport, Jamaica, New York 11430 (telephone: (212) 995-8613). A complete list of birds covered in the Federal Act and regulations is set out in Title 50 of the Code of Federal Regulations. Communications with respect to enforcement of the New York Law

should be directed to a regional office of the Department of Environmental Conservation.

There is plenty of room for improving the legal protection of birds. But that does not detract from the importance of the existing rules. As Justice Holmes said while upholding the Migratory Bird Treaty Act against the attacks on Congress' powers in this area, "But for the treaty and the statute, there might soon be no birds for any powers to deal with."

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LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

Letters may be of a general nature as long as they pertain to New York State ornithology, or may be of a specific nature with reference to something that has appeared in *The Kingbird*. The editors reserve the right *not* to accept a letter for publication, or to edit a letter in accordance with space requirements. All letters received will be acknowledged. Your participation is invited.

1975 FEDERATION STATEWIDE SPRING MIGRATION COUNT

CHERYL BOISE, THOMAS H. DAVIS and GORDON M. MEADE, M.D.

New York birders were out in force between May 9 and 25 for the Federation's 1975 spring migration count. At least 621 observers representing 21 member clubs (4 more than in 1974) and four groups of individuals participated in 26 different counts. The areas covered included portions of all of the state's ten Federation regions.

Despite the feeling of several groups that they missed the peak of migration, 260 species and one hybrid were reported. This total includes 21 species not observed in 1974, but since there were 10 species of 1974 which were not found in 1975 the net increase over 1974 was 11 species. The cumulative list for the two years stands at 270 species.

It is quite possible that the total number of species occurring in the state during the peak migration period mounts as high as 288. Admittedly this number includes several uncommon, rare and hard-to-find migrants but it may be considered an attainable goal.

This year counts were made in the Adirondack areas where all the northern specialties except Boreal Chickadee were noted. There is no doubt they were present as they are fairly common permanent residents.

The principal deficiency in species continues to be among the sea birds which comprise at least half of the species probably present but not yet found. Pelagic counts during the spring count would make a significant addition to the list by adding such species as shearwaters, storm petrels, eiders, scoters, phalaropes and jaegers.

Notable "misses" for both years have been Gray Partridge, American Golden Plover, Whimbrel, Short-eared Owl, Yellow-throated Warbler and Blue Grosbeak. Species recorded in 1974 but missed in 1975 were Red-throated Loon, Common Eider, Surf Scoter, Merlin, Hudsonian Godwit, Ruff, Glaucous Gull, Little Gull, Orange-crowned Warbler and Summer Tanager.

New species added this year were Red-necked Grebe, Gannet, Whistling Swan, Fulvous Tree Duck, Rough-legged Hawk, Peregrine Falcon, Spruce Grouse, King Rail, Purple Gallinule, American Oystercatcher, Stilt Sandpiper, Gull-billed Tern, Barn Owl, Saw-whet Owl, Chuck-will's-widow, Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker, Northern Three-toed Woodpecker, Gray Jay, Raven, Short-billed Marsh Wren and Fox Sparrow. Several unusual observations were submitted

without supporting details and thus could not be accepted for the list—these included such species as Merlin, Connecticut Warbler, Dickcissel and Common Redpoll. Reports were received of Monk Parakeet and Chukar but these are introduced species not yet well established in the state. For this reason they were deleted from the list.

The most unusual species reported were the six Fulvous Tree Ducks at Baiting Hollow Marsh, Long Island, the Purple Gallinule in Brookhaven, Long Island, and the four Gull-billed Terns (including a pair) at Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge. The counts were sprinkled with other highlights—Glossy Ibis and Whistling Swans were reported from the western part of the state as were late Rough-legged Hawks throughout that area.

This year both Bald Eagle and Peregrine Falcon were sighted, and a breeding-plumaged Stilt Sandpiper turned up at Jamaica Bay. There were two Wilson's Phalaropes in western counties. Six species of owls were ferreted out statewide, possibly an indication of a more intensive effort to seek out these nocturnal birds. A concentration of ten Short-billed Marsh Wrens at the north end of Cayuga Lake was reported by two counting groups. A pair of Acadian Flycatchers in Dutchess County is noteworthy as this species rarely nests in the state. Brewster's Warbler, the more common of the two *Vermivora* warbler hybrids, was found by three groups. A Western Meadowlark appeared in the Rochester area where it has become almost a regular visitor for several years past. Single Orchard Orioles were reported on several counts. Tree Sparrows were spotted by two groups and three lingering Fox Sparrows were in the Watertown area. Both Double-crested Cormorant and Cattle Egret were unusual records in Essex County and complete the complement of noteworthy sightings.

Incredibly, only *one* Caspian Tern was located in the entire state, and Loggerhead Shrikes were found on only two counts. A few reports did not include Rock Dove, Starling and House Sparrow; some did not specify the species of scaup or yellowlegs, or did not differentiate as to whether a "Traill's" Flycatcher was Alder or Willow.

The number of species reported on counts ranged from 71 to 189 with an average of 124 on the 26 counts. The highest count was the work of the Buffalo Ornithological Society in Region 1 (except for Allegany County). From Region 2 came the second highest count of 186 species compiled by the joint efforts of the Genesee Ornithological Society and the Rochester Birding Association. The number of

observers statewide ranged from a single individual (who recorded 82 species) to 136.

This year count compilers were requested to report the number of individuals of each species, and 17 counts contained this information. Those who chose not to report number, and some who did, raised objections to this procedure. They pointed out that traditionally the spring Big Day goal has been to cover as many habitats and places, and to accumulate as long a species list as possible while having fun at the same time. It is argued that these objectives do not lend themselves to complete censusing or consistent sampling of an area, and that there are so many variable factors involved as to make the statistical value of numbers as applied to migrating species very questionable. At the annual meeting last fall there was a spirited debate on this question of "to count or not to count." There was strong defense of both points of view. No definite action was taken but there appeared to be considerable opinion that while counting of all species is difficult and of questionable validity and value it might be well to designate for counting those species which seem to be in precarious or changing status—such as raptors, Loggerhead Shrike, and Acadian Flycatcher. The matter will receive further consideration. It has also been suggested that when an unusual species is found the number of individuals should be included in the verification report.

There was also discussion of whether a breeding bird count of some sort might be productive of meaningful data—either instead of, or in addition to the Big Day counts.

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N.B. A list of species seen by all participating groups can be secured for 35¢ from Gordon Meade at the above address. The price is to cover the cost of postage and Xeroxing.

BIRDING BAEDEKER IN PROGRESS

SUSAN RONEY DRENNAN

While the Federation of New York State Bird Clubs was under the stewardship of Gordon Meade, plans were made to facilitate the first steps toward publication of a "where-to-bird-in-New York State" guidebook. With Richard Sloss at the helm, several of those initial activities have been carried further, so that a formal announcement of the details of this project is now in order.

New York State is blessed with a full range of topographical, vegetative, and climatic features. The terrain ranges from sea level to above 5000 feet in the Adirondacks. The vegetation at the highest altitudes, above the timber line, consists mainly of hardy mosses and lichens. At lower altitudes, there are still large areas covered with evergreens—spruce, fir, hemlock, and white pine. There are areas in the more protected sections of the Allegheny Plateau where one can still find hardwood stands—hickory, ash, oak, elm, and nut-bearing trees. In the most southern parts of the state, oak, birch, tulip, maple, beech, sweet gum and laurel abound. Various bushes and vines—cat-briars, wild blackberries, blueberries, raspberries, grapes, poison ivy, and honeysuckle—provide exactly the type of forest understory that is essential to the breeding success of many of the species that nest in New York State. Cherries, peaches, apples, and plums are a few of the native fruits. The climate is as variable as the topography. In winter much of upstate may be enjoying sub-zero temperatures while at the same time temperatures may be as much as 25 or more degrees higher at the seashore, due to the warming effect of the Gulf Stream. Annual precipitation is generally abundant throughout the state and this, to a great extent, determines the health of the state's vegetation.

More than 410 species have occurred in New York State, counting all breeding, wintering and migrant birds. State residents are fortunate to have a new state book to refer to when attempting to determine the status of a given bird in New York—John Bull's *Birds of New York State*, 1974. Is it not logical then that they should also have an exhaustive Baedeker to assist them in locating the state's best bird-finding spots? Is it not also reasonable to expect this publication to be a result of the collective efforts of the finest birders the state can produce—that is to say, a production of the Federation of New York State Bird Clubs?

The Executive Committee of the Federation has decided at this time that the preparation and publication of a comprehensive best

birding areas directory is in fact an entirely feasible project. It would incorporate such elements as: well-executed maps, precise and easy to follow directions, a separate section on Hawk Watches throughout the state, a section listing all of the current Rare Bird Alerts and local hotlines in the state (with room to add more as they are established), a seasonal rating of each area described—much like a four star system, information on available accommodations near each area (motels, campsites, etc.), a section listing birders who would be willing to act as local guides in their areas, an annotated checklist of New York State birds, substantial use of Breeding Bird Survey information, as well as a section listing bird libraries and collections open for study throughout the state. The Executive Committee feels that such a publication would not only be of general use to the many birders in New York but would also benefit the Federation financially and enhance the value of the Federation to individual members and clubs. The book would follow the arrangement of the ten reporting regions embodied in the *Kingbird*, and one of the main features contained in it would be not only descriptions of generally good birding areas, but also descriptions of and directions on how to find *specific* birds (hard to find, or “most wanted” birds).

Presently a thoroughgoing search for already published local and regional New York State guides is under way, with the hope of using many of them, with as little updating as necessary, in the Baedeker. Within a few weeks questionnaires will be sent out to each member club requesting all of the relevant information about specific birding areas frequented and favored by that club. Individuals are of course invited and even urged to request questionnaires from the author in order to make this publication complete in every respect. Member clubs are asked to submit as many forms as necessary to ensure that no pertinent information is absent from the final publication.

For more information and forms please write to: Susan Roney Drennan, 110 Bleecker Street, New York, New York 10012.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Susan Roney Drennan is the Associate Editor of *American Birds*. Her very long list of affiliations includes the Linnaean Society of New York and the Federation of New York State Bird Clubs. A measure of her field activity is her Christmas Count participation of this past winter, which included seven counts in three different states. Along with her husband and two children, she spends a great deal of time on Block Island, where in addition to compiling that Christmas Count, she actively bands, and writes a column for the *Block Island Times*. In addition to her bird pursuits, she is engaged in a research project with Dr. Roger Payne of the New York Zoological Society, determining whale populations and migrations, funded by the World Wildlife Fund.

NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

Hairy Woodpecker with Broken Upper Mandible: While banding birds at my feeder on December 28, 1975, I trapped a female Hairy Woodpecker (*Dendrocopos villosus*). Approximately half of the upper mandible was missing; the stub had healed over.

After releasing the bird, I watched it come in and feed at one of its favorite spots, a log feeder. The feeder hangs upside down with the mixed suet and peanut butter approachable only from the underside of the log. The bird hangs upside down, and drills the food loose with the unbroken mandible. The remaining bit of upper mandible still functions so that the bird can open its mouth and let bits of food fall in. It also uses its tongue to probe for loose pieces.

If forced from this favorite feeder by a Starling or another woodpecker, the bird will feed on suet hanging in a bag, although considerable food is wasted as it falls to the ground. I have also seen this same bird probing under the loose bark of a tree near the feeders.



Dorothy W. Crumb, 3983 Gates Road, Jamesville, N.Y. 13078

Praying Mantis Captures Solitary Vireo: On 14 October 1975, members of the Great South Bay Audubon Society, led by Dr. Melvin Boskin, were proceeding down a path in the John F. Kennedy Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary in the town of Oyster Bay, Long Island. They heard the distress calls of a bird from some nearby low trees. Going in the direction of the calls, they came upon a Solitary Vireo (*Vireo solitarius*) dangling by one wing from the forelegs of a praying mantis, which was attempting to chew on the wing of the bird. The bird and insect were promptly separated by members of the field trip, and the vireo flew away apparently unharmed; the mantis was left chewing on some feathers.

Anthony J. Lauro, 9 DeSoto Road, Amityville, N.Y. 11701

We have been unable to find in the literature, an earlier published record of a mantis capturing a bird. It is unlikely that the mantis would have been able to do more than damage the feathers of the vireo. —Eds.

Veery in December in Ontario County: On 27 December 1975 at about 3:00 p.m., during the Geneva Christmas Bird Count of the Eaton Ornithological Society, Cathy Walsh and I were searching for birds from a bridge over a brushy gully along the narrow drive leading from Route 14 to Houghton House on the Hobart-William Smith College campus in Geneva, Ontario County. While we were watching, a thrush flew out of the gully and landed in a barberry bush about 30 feet away. Using 7 x 35 binoculars we identified it as a Veery (*Catharus fuscescens*). We examined it carefully through a 20x Bauscope Senior. It was all rusty above, with small blurred breast spots not extending very far down the breast. A faint eye ring was present, but not as prominent as in Swainson's Thrush (*C. ustulatus*). It did not seem to be in very good condition. It sat very quietly with feathers extremely fluffed out, and allowed us to approach to within fifteen feet. At one point it ate a barberry and hiccuped several times. We observed it for about ten minutes, and it was still there when we left. About 300 yards farther on we found two Hermit Thrushes (*C. guttatus*) in an area of hawthorn and buckthorn. On several subsequent visits to the area, we were unable to find the Veery again.

Cathy Walsh has both state and federal banding licenses, and we have been banding birds for six years. We are both familiar with all the eastern thrushes, and have banded all except the bluebird.

Paris Trail, Wheat Road, Clifton Springs, N.Y. 14432

The occurrence of the Veery in winter in New York State has not yet been verified with a specimen. —Eds.

ORNITHOLOGY ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO

JOHN B. BELKNAP

Although ornithology might be considered to have been in its infancy during the 1870's, this period was nonetheless one of activity and progress. Admittedly, there were few professional ornithologists in the United States at this time and education in the natural sciences was at a minimum due largely to the prevailing suspicion of "Darwinism."

A "Directory" published in 1877 by S. L. Willard of Utica, N.Y., lists eighteen ornithologists, most of them from the east. Of this number, fourteen later became founders of the American Ornithologists Union or joined in the first year. Public or institutional museums with substantial collections of birds were few, the largest being the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard University, and the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.

The 1870's were the heyday of the private collector with his cabinet of specimens and eggs. The activities of these men contributed much to our knowledge although the purpose in most cases was not the advancement of science. Some of the larger collections eventually found their way into museums. Bull, *Birds of New York State*, lists some thirty collectors, many of whom were active one hundred years ago. A number of journals, most of them short-lived and appealing mainly to collectors, were started during this era. Historical accounts of ornithology in the nineteenth century rely mainly on published works and rarely mention the private collector.

Many of those interested in birds did their own collecting and preparation, although there were a few professional collectors and taxidermists. Two of the better known taxidermists were John G. Bell of New York and John Krider of Philadelphia, who were approaching the end of their careers in the 1870's. Both had birds named for them: Bell's Vireo and Krider's Red-tailed Hawk. Mention should also be made of Ward's Natural History Establishment at Rochester, N.Y. Henry A. Ward founded this unique business of supplying natural history specimens to museums and educational institutions. Taxidermists were required and Ward's became a training school for specialists in the art of preparation.

The Nuttall Ornithological Club, precursor of the American Ornithologists Union, was organized at Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1873, with the Linnaean Society of New York being formed five years later. The Nuttall Club began the publication of a quarterly in 1876. This was the first scientific periodical in the country relating

solely to ornithology, although several earlier journals included material on birds, notably the *American Naturalist* and *Forest & Stream*. Standard works of the period were Coues' *Key to North American Birds* and Baird, Brewer and Ridgway's *Birds of North America*.

Much was being learned of the distribution of birds and this is reflected in local and regional lists which appeared in increasing numbers in the 1870's. In New York State these include published reports by Roosevelt & Minot, S. L. Willard, Edgar A. Mearns, C. H. Merriam, and the Rathbun-Fowler-Wright list.

The relationship of birds to agriculture was recognized in colonial days as testified by references to "maize thieves." In the nineteenth century the part played by birds in connection with agriculture began to be appreciated. The effects were, of course, both beneficial and detrimental. Some early studies of the food habits of birds were made in the 1860's with reports coming out in the following decade. These involved an analysis of stomach contents, including identification of food items whenever possible. Pioneers in this activity include Prof. Samuel Aughey of Nebraska, Prof. S. A. Forbes of Illinois and Dr. J. M. Wheaton of Ohio. This type of work was later carried on by the United States Department of Agriculture.

The era is notable for pioneer field studies in the American west. Due largely to the influence of Spencer F. Baird of the Smithsonian Institution a steady stream of reports on western ornithology was reaching Washington, D.C. Prominent in these studies were Elliott Coues, Edgar A. Mearns, Capt. Charles Bendire and J. G. Cooper.

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HIGHLIGHTS OF THE WINTER SEASON

ROBERT W. SMART

The Winter Season was one of great contrasts—of weather, of birds, and particularly of opinions among the active birders. Many people found this to be a very exciting winter with many oddities to keep up their interest while others found it “dull, dull, deadly dull.” To be sure, some of the adjacent states seemed to gather in most of the more glamorous birds, but one suspects that their press agents were merely working harder. One sad case along this line will be mentioned later, however.

The Regional Editors were in complete agreement about the weather. December was nearly normal; January was bitterly cold and snowy; by the end of February the state was basking in record high temperatures and early migrants gave a false hope of the spring that was still, alas, weeks in the future. The large numbers of geese, ducks, and icterids that appeared during the last week of the month were very welcome, however; it was a joy to hear the American Woodcock performing its aerial spectacular before the first of March. The March let-down was inevitable.

The contrast in the list of birds for the season was fantastic. Region 5 could boast a Spotted Sandpiper and an irruption of Bohemian Waxwings. Region 2 lists Osprey and gallinule among the normally wintering birds from the north. Great numbers of White-throated Sparrows wintered throughout the state and Virginia Rails made a number of appearances. This latter species may be a much more common wintering bird than is currently suspected. The increased use of a tape recorder in the non-breeding season may well change our opinions on a number of rather secretive species that have been wintering undetected. The response is far short of that in the breeding season but at least one Virginia Rail in Dutchess County called briefly in answer to a tape and, on another occasion, popped its head out of the reeds, albeit silently. Again it should be stressed that the tapes do not work nearly as well in the winter but the technique should be tried. As would be expected, Region 10 provides the most remarkable list of half-hardy lingering birds, including Least Bittern, Common Gallinule, American Oystercatcher, Willet, Least Sandpiper, Whip-poor-will, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting (also reported from Dutchess Co.), and Lincoln's Sparrow. Even the remarkably warm weather at the end of February, however, does not prepare one for the records of Forster's Tern and

Rough-winged Swallow in the same region.

From the north the appearance of Boreal Chickadees continued. These were over-shadowed in many minds by the flocks of Bohemian Waxwings in Region 5 and the immense group of 400 in Region 6. No less remarkable were two, and possibly three, Gray Jays that took up residence in Dutchess County and remained for most of the period. Winter finches proved to be somewhat disappointing after an auspicious start, with only the flocks of Common Redpolls providing excitement during the latter part of the period. The two reported Hoary Redpolls come with excellent references and this editor accepts them with more than a touch of envy. A number of other "possible" Hoaries were very wisely left unreported although a number of them were undoubtedly good. The interested reader is referred to the superb photographs in the *Kingbird* of May, 1967 (vol. XVII, no. 2, p. 66).

A number of observers are beginning to comment on the decline of the Black Duck as a wintering bird and at least one editor (Region 5) blames this on the great increase in the feral Mallard population. There may be studies already published on this subject but if so, I am not aware of them. There might be a need to control this semi-wild population of Mallards in the foreseeable future. We need much more information on this.

At the risk of being overly repetitive, care is once again urged in the identification of wintering accipiters. It is hard to believe that the Cooper's Hawk could ever outnumber the Sharp-shinned. In fact, I suspect that the Goshawk is more numerous in most areas than the Cooper's in the winter time. Observers tend to shy away from identifying the "rare" Goshawk and assume that a big accipiter must be a Cooper's. Likewise, a hawk flashing by the picture window as it goes after a bird at the feeder is going to look VERY large. I fully admit that this is a bias on the part of your editor but one which has been built up over a number of years. A good-sized female accipiter seen very well both perched and in flight was the subject of much argument in northern Dutchess Co. and was finally left unidentified. Subsequent sightings only added to the confusion in many minds.

The recent reappearance of European Goldfinches on central Long Island is most puzzling. The comments by the editors of Region 10 deserve careful consideration. John Bull in *Birds of the New York Area* states that there were fewer than six birds in 1955 and that they did not survive much later than that. It seems impossible that

they could have maintained a viable breeding population without detection in such a well birded area for 20 years only to surface suddenly once again. On the other hand, there has been no evidence of deliberate or accidental re-introduction. In view of the legal problems involved, this is, perhaps, not surprising. The suggestion that they were put there to validate the species' position on various New York State bird lists is amusing and opens up a vast, and fortunately unexplored, area of listing, but is not to be taken seriously. Until more evidence is in (or until I see the birds) I will continue to regard them as escapes but will certainly hope for up-to-date reports on the progress of the population. The same should be said for the Monk Parakeet, which has vanished from these records. Has it truly vanished from the state or is it just not being reported?

In a similar vein, I welcome the reports of the "Spotted" Towhee and "Oregon" Junco from Region 2. Do not fail to report identifiable races when they appear. The taxonomists who are responsible for most of the recent changes in status of many familiar "species" are among the first to point out the need for this type of information. A mere name change does not mean that the creature has become an un-bird. I know of none of the lucky observers in Region 9 who saw the "Audubon's" Warbler who said, "Oh, well, it's just another Yellow-rumped."

From a lister's viewpoint, the most frustrating bird of the season does not appear in the following reports. "A perfectly plumaged male Varied Thrush spent the month of January 300 ft. over the state line from Dutchess Co. at Lakeville, Conn., much to the dismay of New York State listers," writes Ed Treacy. Every attempt was made to lure it over the line. Apples were spread on the ground just inside of New York State; a tape recording was played seductively from the nearby bushes. It was all to no avail. In spite of this recalcitrance, one had to admit that it was a handsome bird.

There are a number of candidates for the BOTS award this season. The Ivory Gull that expired most untimely, the two Hoary Redpolls, the variety of out of time and place wanderers. I think, however, that the immature Harris' Sparrow in Chatham gets the nod. It was a handsome bird in a lovely location and the warm hospitality of the Wayne Trimms made it a joy. Many thanks from all who saw the bird.

Millbrook School, Millbrook, N.Y. 12545

NOMENCLATURE

The *Kingbird* follows the nomenclature as established by the AOU's *Check-List of North American Birds*, Fifth Edition, 1957, as modified in *The Auk*, Volume 90, No. 2, April 1973.

REGION 1 — NIAGARA FRONTIER

VIVIAN MILLS PITZRICK

Opinion rated the winter from mild to unprintable. Dec. weather was near average, with large ponds freezing by the 26th and still frozen through Feb. Jan. was the coldest since 1970. Mean temperature was 6°F (3.3°C) below normal and Lake Erie froze Jan. 10th, a month earlier than last year. At Alfred, Jan. snowfall was 23.4 in. (.594 m) above average. Early Feb. was normal, but from the 10th to the 29th, false spring temperatures quickly melted the snow cover, which had persisted since Dec., and raised the Feb. mean to 8°F (4.4°C) above normal.

Even though Dec. was genuine winter, following the mild fall, several birds stayed later than usual. Then, near the close of the season, the balmy late Feb. triggered spring migration nearly 3 weeks early for many species, including significant flights of Canada Geese, Whistling Swans and Red-winged Blackbirds. Plentiful winter foods included rabbits and fruits of Box Elder, White Ash, locust and sumac. The cone crop was poor, weed seeds were scarce by Jan. 15, and the persistent deep snow cover favored the large mouse population.

Positives for the winter were: 1) good counts of Mallard, White-winged and Black Scoters, and Am. Coot; 2) fine numbers of the Sharp-shinned, Cooper's and Marsh Hawks, and Am. Kestrel; 3) more than common winter Killdeer; 4) commendable number of owl reports; 5) regional luminosity from well-deserved halos of prompt reporters; 6) more than usual wintering Mourning Doves; 7) an invasion of Red-breasted Nuthatches, and many Boreal Chickadees; 8) excellent numbers of Tufted Titmice, Carolina Wrens and Cardinals; 9) wide reports of the N. Shrike; and 10) a beautiful flight of Com. Redpolls, and Evening Grosbeaks, and good reports of Purple Finches, Am. Goldfinches and Pine Siskins, but generally a mediocre finch season otherwise.

Negatives for the winter were: 1) low numbers of Pintails, Redheads, Ruffed Grouse and Ring-necked Pheasants; 2) a so-so Larid season; 3) an off Snowy Owl year; 4) about half last year's Mockingbird number; and 5) but few Brown Creepers and meadowlarks.

Winter rarities include Goshawk, Peregrine Falcon, Barn Owl, Boreal Chickadee, House Finch and Hoary Redpoll.

Abbreviations: BOS—Buffalo Ornithological Society; GMA or WMA—Game or Wildlife Management Area; NP or NS—Nature Preserve or Sanctuary; NWR—National Wildlife Refuge; RCC—Regional Christmas Census, Dec. 21-Jan. 3 (Audubon); SP—State Park.

Contributors: Robert Andrie, Elizabeth Brooks, Doris Burton, Lou Burton, Donald Clark, Jane Clark, Stephen Eaton, David Freeland, Helen Graves, Ken Johnson (Weather Data, Wellsville), Rhea Keople (RhK), Robert Keople, Clarence Klingensmith, Robert Macauley, Virginia Macauley, Michael Pitzrick, Raymond Pitzrick, Vivian Pitzrick, Robert Sundell, James VanScoy, Regina VanScoy, Ed Wilmot (Weather Data, Rosburg).

Observers: Harold Axtell, Thomas Bourne, Victor Carpenter, Lorry Chapman, Dorothy Danner, Frances DeGroff, Flora Elderkin, John Forness, Mary Forness (MFr), Marcya Fos-

ter, Berlin Heck, Harriette Klabunde, Walter Klabunde, Erma Larson, Alice McKale, Willard McKale, Harold Mitchell, John Morse, Katherine Palmer, Frances Rew, Arthur Schaffner, Pauline Schwartz (PSc), Robert Schwartz (RSc), Ann Scott (AnS), Robert Smalley (RSm), Joseph Thill, Alice Ulrich, David Wilcove, Larry Wilson.

LOONS-DUCKS: Common Loon max. was 6 at Chautauqua L. Dec. 2 (RS). Red-throated Loons seen were: one at Niagara F., Dec. 7 (DF), and two at Dunkirk Harbor, Dec. 27 (Sundells). A Red-necked Grebe came to Chautauqua L. Dec. 16; and here also 342 Horned Grebe stopped Dec. 2 (RS).

The max. Whistling Swan fall concentration was 170 on Chautauqua L., Dec. 16 (RS); but it was swans "to the right," swans "to the left" across the Southern Tier, Feb. 21-29, with max. 84 in Kiantone, Chautauqua Co., Feb. 21 (RS+). A max. 154 Canada Geese appeared at Alfred Dec. 19 (EB); and a "few hundred" spring migrants arr. at Iroquois NWR Feb. 20, earliest ever noted (BH, *fide Buffalo Evening News*, Feb. 26), with 12,000 there Feb. 27 (DD). A Snow Goose (blue morph) arr. at Shelby Sinks, Feb. 27 (FR, AU+), and 5 were seen at Yates Feb. 29 (RA+).

On the RCC, Mallards tallied 1533 (high) and Black Ducks 423 (low). Gadwall noted were: on the RCC, 105 (high); a max. 8 on the Niagara R. Dec. 7, 13 (DF, HM+); and one at Forest Lawn Cem., Buffalo, Feb. 1 (DF+). Out of season Green-winged Teal were: 1 to 2 at Forest Lawn Cem., Jan. 30-Feb. 1 (DF, FR+), and 2 at Scio Feb. 14 (VP). Wood Ducks were scarce, with only 2 on the RCC (St. Bonaventure), Dec. 27; one at Jamestown Jan. 30 (Beal); and 2 on the Allegany R., Portville-Limestone, Jan. 14 (JV,RV).

High for the season for Redheads was 300 on Chautauqua L., Dec. 16 (RS), and for Canvasbacks was 2500 at Niagara F., Dec. 7 (DF). Although rare in winter, 76 Lesser Scaup in small flocks were sighted at 4 locations. Tallied on the RCC were: Oldsquaws, 732 (high); and scoters (all high); White-winged, 23; Surf, 4; and Black, 13. A single Ruddy Duck was sighted at Niagara F. Dec. 7 (RA+). Noteworthy merganser reports were: Hooded, max. of 250 on Chautauqua L. Dec. 9 (RS) (low); Common, max. 1500 on the Niagara R. Dec. 13 (HM,DF+); Red-breasted, 461 on the RCC (high), and 10 at Scio Jan. 30 (VP), an uncommon location.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Single GOSHAWKS appeared: at Alfred, Dec. 4 (CK); at Belmont, Dec. 15 (DB, LB); on the RCC (Jamestown), Feb. 21; in Ward, Feb. 21 (Yelle); and at Lancaster Feb. 27 (DF). Again, wintering Cooper's Hawks outnumbered Sharp-shinned, very often reported by outraged feeder watchers; compiled on the RCC were: Sharpies, 7, and Cooper's, 11.

An unusual winter Red-shouldered Hawk appeared for the RCC (Oak Orchard), Dec. 23, Rough-legged Hawks tallied 11 on the RCC; and 20 areas noted the species, usually singles. Spotted on the RCC were: 3 Marsh Hawks (with 9 additional, seen on count day outside the Scio Audubon Circle in Allegany Co.), and 126 Am. Kestrels, an upward trend also indicated by individual reports. A PEREGRINE FALCON—a rare find—was identified at Wheatfield Jan. 11 (Stein, HM, Off, Lewandows).

The Turkey flourished on ash seed in Cattaraugus Co. (SE), but the few field reports were of only small numbers. A Virginia Rail was spotted at Iroquois NWR Dec. 23 (JM+), nearly 2 months past its usual dates. American Coot, with 37 on the RCC (high), reached a remarkable fall high of 4900 on Chautauqua L. Dec. 16, and an excellent max. winter count of 30 at Dunkirk Harbor Jan. 1 (RS). Among the super-early spring migrants was Am. Woodcock, arr. over 2 weeks early: one at Belmont Feb. 19 (RSm), one at Alfred Feb. 25 (EB), and max. 2 at Amity L. Feb. 26, 27 (RP, VP). The only reports of Com. Snipe were: 3 at Red Bird Corners Dec. 8 (Beal), and one at Belmont Dec. 31 (DB, LB).

Rare here, Purple Sandpipers appeared at the Niagara R. as singles, Dec. 7 (DF) and Dec. 23 (HA), and a max. 4, very late, Feb. 16, 26, 28 (HA). At the same location, Dunlin,

also late, were discovered, with max. 3 on Dec. 13, 28, 31 (HA) and Jan. 1 (RA+).

Noteworthy Larids from late Dec. thru the season were: a max. 8 each of Glaucous and Iceland (*glaucoides*) Gulls in the Niagara R.-Dunkirk Harbor area; 4611 Herring Gulls on the RCC (low); 6 Bonaparte's Gulls on the Niagara R. Jan. 31 (Lloyd, Sunderlin+), later than usual and early in the season; a single imm. Little Gull at Niagara F. Dec. 7 (DF); and a late Com. Tern at Beaver Island SP, Dec. 7 (JT).

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Alert owl watchers reported more than usual Great Horned Owls, a comfortable number of Screech Owls, 4 Barred Owls and several of the less common species: a BARN OWL at Hamburg Dec. 8 (TB); at least 8 individual Snowy Owls in 7 areas (a poor year); a Long-eared Owl at E. Amherst, Feb. 4 (DF); 9 Short-eared Owls, as singles or pairs, from 7 locations; and a Saw-whet Owl at Hamburg Feb. 25 (TB).

Single Red-bellied Woodpeckers appeared at Spring Brook Dec. 28-Feb. 29 (DD), and at Hamburg Feb. 5 (TB), west of its regular Genesee R. haunts. The only Red-headed Woodpecker reported was one at Scio, Feb. 22 (RM, VM). A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was seen at Spring Brook Dec. 14-18 (DD), and 2 were recorded on the RCC (Hamburg-E. Aurora) Dec. 28. A Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker was found at Buffalo Dec. 24 (DW), Jan. 15-18 (McMichael, DW) and Feb. 1 (DF); one was on the RCC (BOS) Dec. 21, the second time in history of the RCC.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Total Horned Larks on the RCC was 169 (270 last year). Many(!) BOREAL CHICKADEES livened up the winter bird watching, with appearances: 2 on the RCC; and singles at Cuba Dec. 1-31, Jan. 7, 23 (RhK, RK); at Martha's Vineyard, Chautauqua Co. Dec. 13, 18 (Sundells, Pihblad, Roby); at E. Aurora, Dec. 28 (Stein, HM, Off); at Olean Dec. 30 (Fox); at Bemus Pt. Jan. 16 (RS, Beal+); at Hamburg Jan. 30 (TB); at Houghton Jan. 1-31, Feb. 15 (Fero, VC); and at Jamestown Feb. 21 (RS, Tener, Cooney). On the RCC, Red-breasted Nuthatches numbered 59 (30 last year), and Brown Creepers, 41 (27 last year). A few, usually single, Winter Wrens were seen regularly all season, but on the RCC there were only 3 (7 last year). Widely reported all winter elsewhere, the Carolina Wren disappeared near Vandalia following the cold period in Jan. (SE). Unusual in winter, both the Gray Catbird and Brown Thrasher were present: the former, singles at Alfred Dec. 31 (Rhodes) and at Elma Jan. 5 (DD); and the latter, individuals on the RCC (Jamestown) Dec. 21 and (Hamburg-E. Aurora) Dec. 28; as well as singles at Clarence, Jan. 10-26, Feb. 5-9 (Balmas), and at the Iroquois NWR Jan. 10-31 (Olsen).

Am. Robins were 44 (20 last year) on the RCC. One to 3 Hermit Thrushes were found in three locations. A favored few (they must live right!) saw the first E. Bluebirds of the spring season: single birds at Friendship Feb. 23 (Compton), at Scio Feb. 26 (Roberts) and at Alfred Feb. 26 (Cushing *vide* EB). Two Ruby-crowned Kinglets tried to winter: one in Houghton Dec. 16-Jan. 20 (Fero+), which was recorded on the Allegany Co. Christmas Count, outside the Scio Audubon Circle, and another at Canadaway Creek NS Dec. 27 (FR).

VIREOS-WARBLED: Two Yellow-rumped Warblers appeared on the RCC Dec. 21 (BOS and Jamestown); a dozen touched at Lake Erie SP Jan. 1 (RS); and one was in Hume Jan. 9-31 (Main *vide* KP). A Pine Warbler was documented at Batavia Jan. 10 (Masons, Seamans).

WEAVERS-SPARROWS: The E. Meadowlark max. of 4 fall reports was 6 at Rosburg Dec. 23 (MP); first spring arr. were 16 at Pinehurst Feb. 26 (RA+). The spring surge of Red-winged Blackbirds began early with max. 1100 at Hinsdale Feb. 21 (HM+). 17 Rusty Blackbirds were recorded on the RCC (none last year); max. of spring flight was 25 at Clarence, Feb. 29 (Happ, Gibson); a N. Oriole, in Buffalo Dec. 4 (Kikta+).

Cardinals appeared at feeders in unprecedented numbers, with max. feeder-flock, 15 at Amity L. Jan. 20 (HG); numbered on the RCC were 1270 (high). Evening Grosbeak tally on the RCC was 2158 (1119 last year); banded: at Alfred, 422 (EB) and at Farmersville Sta-

tion, 443 (DC). A max. 30 HOUSE FINCHES appeared at Eggertsville Jan. 1-Feb. 1 (Krists, DF); and up to 8 spent Feb. at Cheektowaga (PSc,RSc).

A HOARY REDPOLL was carefully identified at Alfred Feb. 26 (EB). Com. Redpolls numbered 150 on the RCC (none last year) and were reported from 26 areas. (What a flight!)

A Rufous-sided Towhee appeared for the Allegany Co. Christmas Census, outside the Scio Audubon Circle Jan. 3; others noted were 2 at Alfred Dec. 2-9, Jan. 24 (Cushing, Eisenhardt *vide* EB), and one in Cattaraugus Co. Dec. 13 (JF,MFr). An incredibly late Savannah Sparrow was found at Batavia Dec. 30 (Salways, Mason). Notable counts of other sparrows on the RCC were: Field, 7 (16 last year); White-crowned, 11 (low); White-throated, 245 (low); Swamp, 26 (13 last year); Song: 183 (144 last year). A Fox Sparrow, on the Allegany Co. Christmas Census, outside the Scio Audubon Circle, Jan. 3, was very late, as was the one in Olean, Dec. 18 (Woodard+) and another in Lake View, Jan. 30(!). (TB). The only reports of Lapland Longspurs were from the L. Ontario plains: 100 at Yates and 50 at Somerset Jan. 12 (WK,HK). Snow Buntings numbered 1908 on the RCC (3023 last year); max. individual count for the Southern Tier was 350 in Amity Jan. 11 (RP,VP); max. report for the northern counties was 2000(!) at Youngstown Jan. 12 (HK,WK).

Amity Lake, Belmont, New York 14813

REGION 2 – GENESEE

RICHARD T. O'HARA

In some respects this has been a contradictory winter. Early December was open and mild followed by almost two months of steady cold. Snowfall has been rather light, about 67 inches (1.7 m) but there was no real thaw until about Feb. 20 and the ground was continually snow-covered. Most water was ice-covered from early January until late February. January temperatures averaged a few degrees below normal but February was warmer than average. Only a few days had below 0° F (-17.7° C) readings. A long spell of remarkably mild weather set in about Feb. 22 and all snow and most ice was gone within a week. Record high temperatures, around 60° F (15.5° C) were reached on at least two dates in late February.

As might be expected this mild spell started a very early movement of the first spring migrants. Thousands of Canada Geese arrived by Feb. 24 and 25 together with many Whistling Swans, several species of ducks, blackbirds, robins and a few others.

The mild weather of late fall kept many species here to be noted on Christmas census counts and beyond. These, added to a good flight of several erratic winter visitors, resulted in high numbers of total species on both counts.

Rarities: American Bittern, Harlequin Duck, King Eider, Osprey, Virginia Rail, Common Gallinule, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Northern Oriole, Dickcissel. Also the western races of both the Dark-eyed Junco and Rufous-sided Towhee.

Abbreviations: BB—Braddock Bay, Can L.—Canandaigua Lake, CL—Conesus Lake, HP—Hamlin Park, HL—Hemlock Lake, IB—Irondequoit Bay, LO—Lake Ontario, MP—Mendon Ponds, SC—Salmon Creek, SB—Sodus Bay, WP—Webster Park, WL—west lakeshore.

Observers: Ron & Kay Ballard, Bill Carlson, Michael Carlson, Julie Claffey, Robert Coffee, Jerry Czech, Robert Dobson, Joan Esley, June Feder, John & Arlene Foster, Genesee Ornithological Society, Genesee West Audubon Society, William Gordon, Evelyn Hamilton, William Hartranft, Norman Henderson, Allen Kemnitzner, Jim & Walter C. List-

man, Warren Lloyd, Haywood Madden, mob—many observers, Richard O'Hara, Chip Perrigo, Frank & Gerry Phelps, Al Shay & Marianne McAdam, Jeanne Shelby, Robert & Sue Spahn, Leo Tanghe, Steve Taylor, Mike & Tom Tetlow, Robert Thoman.

LOONS—DUCKS: A single Red-throated Loon was on IB on Jan. 3 (R&KB). Red-necked Grebes were noted twice in Dec. as were Double-crested Cormorants (late). Five Great Blue Herons on Dec. 21 is a good count (M&TT). An **AMERICAN BITTERN** seen at MP Jan. 3 and found dead a few days later is our latest date ever (mob). Whistling Swans stayed late—through Dec. and returned early in good numbers—best count was 180 on Feb. 28 (J&AF). Canada Geese were spectacular after Feb. 21 with 75,000 already on or near WL on the 28th. A few Snow Geese came too—both morphs(CP).

Ducks were better this winter than last but mergansers were still scarce. Greater Scaup, Redhead, Canvasback and Oldsquaw were all up and Ruddy Ducks were especially noteworthy—max. 15 Jan. 13 CL (JC&JS). All common migrant species were reported in late Feb. except both teal and Wood Duck, A **HARLEQUIN DUCK** (imm.) was seen at Russell Station on LO Jan. 10 (J&WCL) and two **KING EIDERS** were noted on BB Dec. 12 (WCL). Scoters were rather scarce.

HAWKS—ALCIDS: In spite of favorable conditions in late Feb. only a few hawks were migrating—accipiters, Red-tails, Marsh and Rough-legged Hawks. At least three Goshawks wintered near Webster (JC) and there were several reported elsewhere. Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks were also noted several times each month. Up to 11 Rough-legged Hawks wintered near HP (WCL *et al.*). A very late **OSPREY** was reported in Hamlin Dec. 30 (EH *et al.*). An adult Bald Eagle was at CL Jan. 13 (JC&JS) while the nesting pair at HL was last seen late in Dec. (RO).

A wintering **VIRGINIA RAIL** at MP seemed healthy on Jan. 31 in spite of much ice and snow (J. Fed). American Coot wintered in large numbers on Can L. and elsewhere. A Ruffed Grouse in Webster Dec. 16-21 is unusual (DW) while another at Sodus and one at MP are more normal locations. A **COMMON GALLINULE** at SC Dec. 13 was late (WCL). A Killdeer on Jan. 18 was wintering (RD<) and migrants had returned by Feb. 26 (MC *et al.*). American Woodcock were back on the same date (R&SS).

Late shorebird records in Dec. included Purple Sandpiper Dec. 21 and 22 at IB (AK&ST). White-rumped Sandpiper Dec. 1-5 at BB (mob) and Red Phalarope Dec. 2-4 BB (NH&WCL).

A few Glaucous and Iceland Gulls were present as usual—max. 4 and 3 respectively. A very high count of 250 Great Black-backed Gulls at IB is noteworthy—Jan. 3 (AS&MM). Gulls were quite scarce for a while in mid-winter but huge flocks had returned by late Feb. A few Bonaparte's Gulls lingered into Jan. and one was seen on Feb. 26 at WP (WL). The last Little Gulls were noted at Rock Beach on Jan. 1, 3 birds (RS *et al.*).

PIGEONS—WOODPECKERS: Mourning Doves—more than ever, flocks of up to 100 or more at feeders everywhere. Both Screech and Great Horned Owls in good numbers—high counts of 14 and 27 respectively. One Barred Owl was noted in Bergen Swamp Feb. 21 (JS *et al.*). A Long-eared Owl was heard at HL Dec. 28 (M&TT). Short-eared Owls were present all winter south and west of Rochester—flocks of six to eight in both areas (mob). A Saw-whet Owl was at SB on Jan. 11 (WH *et al.*). Snowy Owls were entirely absent after Jan. 1, and only a few were seen before that.

A few Belted Kingfishers and many Common Flickers wintered as usual. Pileated Woodpeckers were reported several times each month and Red-bellied Woodpeckers are now too common to be noteworthy in this region. At least three Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers wintered here and the max. count of Red-headed Woodpeckers was five at Geneseo on Jan. 25 (A&JF).

FLYCATCHERS—STARLINGS: A count of 616 Horned Larks on Dec. 13 is high (GWAS). A **RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET** stayed all winter at a Pittsford feeder (WG).

Water Pipit were noted last on Dec. 28 and reappeared on Feb. 25 (early). Brown Creepers and Golden-crowned Kinglets were scarce, so were Cedar Waxwings. Carolina Wrens apparently survived the winter well in spite of the long cold spell. A Gray Catbird at MP on Jan. 3 and a Brown Thrasher at HP on Jan. 2 were trying to do the same, and so was a Hermit Thrush seen at MP Jan. 17 (GOS). Am. Robins were not as common as some winters; E. Bluebirds were present in several places including Allens Creek, 1-4 birds Jan. 9-14 (RT). Northern Shrikes were widely distributed but not too common. The first Loggerhead Shrike was seen on Feb. 24 at BB (CP). Hundreds of thousands of Starlings were again roosting in Gates.

VIREOS-WARBLEDERS: At least 14 Yellow-rumped Warblers were seen Jan. 17 on the Nature trail in HP where they now winter each year (GOS).

WEAVERS-SPARROWS: Eastern Meadowlarks were scarce this winter until the first migrants appeared on Feb. 28. A Northern Oriole appeared at a feeder in Perinton on Dec. 12 and 13 (F&GP). The first migrant Rusty Blackbird was noted on Feb. 26 (WL). Eight thousand Red-winged Blackbirds were seen passing BB on Feb. 21 (CP&AS). These included many females. Grackles and cowbirds were becoming quite widespread by the end of Feb. **DICKCISSELS** were reported from Rush Feb. 18 (BC *et al.*). There were also two in Walworth all Jan. (JE).

Winter finches as follows: Evening Grosbeak—average numbers until early Feb., then dropped off sharply. Purple Finch—not many except for 70 Jan. 23 CL (HM). House Finch—regular in a few places now. Pine Grosbeak—scarce except at HP, apparently gone from there also after early Feb. Common Redpolls—good flight but quite local in distribution; max. 500 Dec. 28 HL (M&TT). Pine Siskin—only a few. American Goldfinch—normal, good numbers throughout. Red Crossbill—scarce, only two reported after Nov. White-winged Crossbill—only one all during Jan., Penfield (L. Brucks).

A Rufous-sided Towhee was seen Jan. 31 MP (J. Fed) and a **SPOTTED TOWHEE** (western race of Rufous-sided Towhee) appeared at a feeder in Chili during Feb. (RC *et al.*). One **OREGON JUNCO** (western race of Dark-eyed Junco) was noted in Kendall Feb. 8-15 (JS). Tree Sparrow numbers were good this year—up to 500 per day. Field and White-throated and White-crowned Sparrows were also present in small numbers, mostly at feeders. A single Fox Sparrow appeared in Webster Jan. 26-31 (R&SS). Lapland Longspurs were scarce until late Jan., then present in small numbers. Snow Bunting—good but quite local, best reported 1700 WL (R&SS).

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REGION 3 — FINGER LAKES

W. E. BENNING

November's warm fall weather continued to mid-December when the temperature plunged to below normal and the snows came. The December average was about normal. January averaged 7° F (4° C) below normal with a low of -20 (-29° C). Snow accumulated to a ten inch (.254 m) cover. The first ten days of February were the same. Then the temperature shot up, remained high and hit the 60's before the end of the month. At Ithaca it was the warmest February since 1957 averaging 6° F (3° C) above normal.

The "spring" weather of February triggered a migratory movement two weeks early. Canada and Snow Geese and Icterids poured in by the thousands. Lesser numbers of Mallards, Black Ducks, Pintails, American Wigeon and Ring-necked Ducks came. A scattering

of Killdeer and American Woodcock appeared.

The Boreal Chickadee irruption mentioned in the Fall Season report continued and equaled, if not surpassed, the big invasion of 1961-62. All the winter finches were observed with Evening Grosbeaks the most abundant and both crossbills hard to find. Am. Goldfinches were everywhere.

The New York State Waterfowl Count registered increases. Brubaker reported many more ducks on the south end of Seneca Lake. Jones writes of an extraordinary raft of 50,000 Redheads observed by Jack Weise on Seneca Lake January 28-30. With the small rodent population low and under a heavy snow cover, buteos moved out in January, but returned with the February thaw. The same reasons may explain the increased predation of small birds at feeders by Am. Kestrels.

The recent Carolina Wren build-up seems to have survived the severe weather. There were several reports of wintering Eastern Bluebirds. A Cape May Warbler and an immature Rose-breasted Grosbeak, both at Penn Yan feeders, were noteworthy.

Rarities: Raven, Fish Crow, Boreal Chickadee, Yellow-headed Blackbird.

Abbreviations: Cay—Cayuga; CC—Christmas Count with Cent Cay for Central Cayuga, E for Elmira, G for Geneva, I for Ithaca, M for Montezuma, WG for Watkins Glen; MNWR—Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge; SAD—Seneca Army Depot; Sen—Seneca; WFC—Waterfowl Census.

Compilers and Contributors: Jack Brubaker (Watkins Glen); W. E. Benning; Paul Du Bowry; James Gibson; Robert Gustafson (MNWR); Bernice Hilfiker; Wilfred Howard; Eleanor Jones; Morgan Jones (SAD); Richard and Sally Jorgensen; Elaine Kibbe (Ithaca); Malcolm Lerch (Penn Yan); Robert and Lisa Lewis; Dorothy McIlroy; Thomas Riley; Jayson Walker; Jeffery Walters; Mary Welles (Elmira).

LOONS—DUCKS: Common Loon: 6 WFC; 1 Cay L. thru. Red-necked Grebe: 1 WGCC. Horned Grebe: down on all the lakes; 100 WFC. Pied-billed Grebe: CCs; 1 I, 1 WG; 22 WFC. Great Blue Heron: usual few wintered. Black-crowned Night Heron: 2 on open stream Elmira Feb. 21 (Joe DeCanio) and 1 same area Feb. 24 (Ruth Rogers) both *fide* MW, no verifying details. Mute Swan: 1 Mud Lock north end Cay L. all Feb. (RSJ). Whistling Swan: 15 Elmira Feb. 21; 11 Branchport Feb. 25; 9 MNWR Feb. 26. Canada Goose: WFC 7640; 50,000 MNWR Feb. 29. Snow Goose: 6,000 MNWR Feb. 29.

The following duck counts at MNWR were made Feb. 28-29. Mallard: 6998 WFC; 1500 MNWR. Black: 1349 WFC; 1000 MNWR. Gadwall: 125 WFC; 50 MNWR; 3 wintered Branchport. Pintail: 9 WFC; 450 MNWR; 1 wintered Dresden; 10 Elmira Dec. 22. Green-winged Teal: 1 wintered Union Springs and Branchport; 1 Sapsucker Woods Feb. 12-25. Am. Wigeon: 69 WFC; 50 MNWR. Wood Duck: 1 wintered Sapsucker Woods and Elmira. Redhead: see opening remarks; 12,272 WFC; 40 MNWR; 1 Horseheads Feb. 10-20. Ring-necked Duck: 25 WFC; 20 MNWR. Greater Scaup: 1024 WFC. Lesser Scaup: 153 WFC. Com. Goldeneye: 557 WFC; 30 MNWR; 8 Elmira Jan. 18. Bufflehead: 225 WFC; 20 MNWR; 1 Elmira Jan. 18. Oldsquaw: 78 WFC. White-winged Scoter: 1 WFC; 1 Sheldrake Feb. 13; 2 MNWR Feb. 15. Hooded Merganser: 24 WFC. Com. Merganser: 97 WFC; 30 MNWR. Red-breasted Merganser: 27 WFC.

HAWKS—ALCIDS: Goshawk: CC's: 2 G, 1 I, 2 M; singles at Sen Falls, Geneva, SAD, Horseheads, Big Flats. Sharp-shinned Hawk: CC's: 3 G, 1 I, 1 M, 3 WG; MJ reports a concentration along eastern shore of Sen L. after first week of Jan. Cooper's Hawk: CC's: 1 Cent Cay, 3 E, 2 G, 2 I, 3 M, 1 WG; regular SAD thru; 1 Niles Jan. 10. Red-tailed Hawk: at Elmira WH reports groups of 3 moving north on Jan. 12, 17 and 26; MJ saw a dozen moving north SAD Feb. 29. Rough-legged Hawk: down greatly from last year's unusual numbers; few after early Jan. Bald Eagle: adult Penn Yan Feb. 19 (D. Pinckney *fide* ML). Marsh

Hawk: more reports than in recent years; 9 on the CC's; remarkable concentration of 11 in a field on Yerkes Rd. near Romulus Dec. 14 gone by Jan. 1; reported from Ithaca, Clifton Springs, Clyde, Newark, Elmira, Hall (2), MNWR (4). MERLIN: 1 Union Springs Jan. 1, 6 and Feb. 9 (Carl Strickland *fide* PD) no verifying details. Am. Kestrel 210 on 6 CC's.

Ruffed Grouse: CC's: 1 E, 3 G, 20 I, 1 M, 4 WG. Turkey: CC's: 2 E, 1 I. Am. Coot: 1634 WFC; up on Keuka L. Killdeer: wintered Phelps (3), Ithaca (3); arr. Myers Point Feb. 22 two weeks early; widespread by Feb. 29. Am. Woodcock: arr. Ithaca Feb. 23 (Cox) 3 weeks early; several late Feb. sightings. Common Snipe: 3 wintered thru Jan. at a spring near Phelps; 2 ECC. GLAUCOUS GULL: 1 Union Springs Jan. 3 (Carl Strickland).

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Mourning Dove: new highs on CC's totaling 2858 birds. Barn Owl: 1 Fayette Dec. 27 and Jan. 11 (MJ). Screech Owl: CC's: 1 Cent Cay, 6 G, 3 I, 2 M, 4 WG. Great Horned Owl: CC's: 2 Cent Cay, 2 E, 8 G, 15 I, 30 M; 1 Niles Dec. 21. Snowy Owl: very white bird MNWR Jan. 2 (MJ). Short-eared Owl: King Ferry roost abandoned; only occasional birds at Watts Rd. Quarry Sen. Co.; 7 at Jennings farm roost Yerkes Rd. Romulus; 1 Elmira Jan. 2; "several" Penn Yan; 1 Watkins Glen. Belted Kingfisher: usual wintering at favored locations. Com. Flicker: CC's: 10 Cent Cay, 1 E, 24 G, 20 I, 28 M, 5 WG. Pileated Woodpecker: CC's: 4 G, 11 I, 1 M, 3 WG. Red-bellied Woodpecker: CC's: 18 Cent Cay, 1 E, 37 G, 8 I, 16 M, 6 WG. Red-headed Woodpecker: CC's: 1 Cent Cay, 4 G, 1 WG; 1 Interlaken Feb. 9. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: CC's: 1 Cent Cay, 1 G, 1 I.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Horned Lark: good numbers including many of the northern sub-species. RAVEN: 1 Arnot Forest Jan. 31 heard and reported by Ken Wilson and Betsy Vander and also independently by Doug Basset (*fide* PD); 2 Monterey Feb; 1 Oak Hill near Alpine Feb. 28-29 (Barlow Rhodes *fide* JB). FISH CROW: 1 Ithaca Feb. 22 (Ken Rosenberg) and Feb. 25 (Fred Atwood). CAROLINA CHICKADEE (hypothetical): identified by call by WH and Prof. Merrill of Elmira College independently of each other at Elmira Dec. 14 (*fide* MW). BOREAL CHICKADEE: up to 8 birds reported from 6 locations in the Ithaca area; 7 birds at Elmira feeders; 2 Union Springs. Tufted Titmouse: CC's: 16 Cent Cay, 23 E, 25 G, 29 I, 3 M, 5 WG; 4 Canandaigua; 1 Clyde, "several" Clifton Springs. Red-breasted Nuthatch: CC's: 3 Cent Cay, 5 E, 4 G, 21 I, 2 M, 2 WG; "numerous" Elmira; few other reports.

House Wren: 1 Ithaca Feb. 26 (S. Sabo). Winter Wren: CC's: 1 G, 2 WG; 1 Elmira Feb. 10. Carolina Wren: CC's: 1 Cent Cay, 5 E, 2 G, 8 I, 6 WG. Long-billed Marsh Wren: 1 WGCC. Mockingbird: widespread reports. Gray Catbird: 2 ICC. Brown Thrasher: 1 ICC. Hermit Thrush: CC's: 2 G, 1 I, 1 WG. VEERY: 1 GCC well seen by Paris Trail and Cathy Walsh. Verification report on file. Eastern Bluebird: wintering reports from Geneva, Ithaca, MNWR, Watkins Glen, Elmira, Penn Yan, Clyde. Golden-crowned Kinglet: CC's: 3 E, 1 G, 46 I, 8 WG; 2 Niles Jan. 10, down at SAD. Ruby-crowned Kinglet: 5 GCC. Water Pipit: 1 ICC; 1 WGCC. N. Shrike: CC's: 1 Cent Cay, 1 E, 2 G, 7 I, 4 M, 1 WG; 1 Cohocton Jan. 10; 1 Newark; none Penn Yan.

VIREOS-WARBLES: Yellow-rumped Warbler: 1 Big Flats Dec. 6-Jan. 19; 1 Cay L. State Park Dec. 7 Junius Ponds Dec. 27; 1 Milliken Station Rd. Jan. 6; 1 Stewart Park Feb. 24. Cape May Warbler: 1 Penn Yan feeder late Dec.-early Jan. (ML,mob).

WEAVERS-SPARROWS: Eastern Meadowlark: amazing 90 on Cent Cay CC; most sightings in Dec. YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD: immature Montour Falls WGCC (JB, mob). Rusty Blackbird: CC's: 5 G, 2 WG; arr Ithaca Feb. 7. ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK: immature Orcutt's feeder Penn Yan Jan. 25-mid-Feb. (ML). Evening Grosbeak: heavy invasion. Purple Finch: scarce except Elmira and Penn Yan. House Finch: CC's: 38 E, 5 G, 52 I; 1 at feeder Penn Yan; 1 Odessa thru; 17 Watkins Glen. Pine Grosbeak: CC's: 2 E, 2 I, 3 WG; Hammond Hill State Forest 25 Dec. 10 and 30 Feb. 27; 36 Turkey Hill early Feb. Com. Redpoll: widespread; 1000 plus flock Penn Yan (ML). Pine Siskin: CC's: 13 Cent Cay, 93 E, 14 G, 119 I, 20 M, 1 WG; more than usual Penn Yan and Elmira. Am. Gold-

finch: numerous. Red Crossbills: 14 GCC; 15 ICC. White-winged Crossbill: 2 WGCC; 2 Ithaca Feb. 2; 2 Six Mile Creek. Rufous-sided Towhee: CC's: 2 Cent Cay, 2 E, 1 I.

Savannah Sparrow: CC's: 2 Cent Cay, 2 G. Dark-eyed Junco: Plentiful. Tree Sparrow: Plentiful. Chipping Sparrow: CC's: 2 Cent Cay, 1 E. Field Sparrow: CC's: 4 Cent Cay, 3 E, 1 G, 7 I, 2 M; 1 Newark late Dec. White-crowned Sparrow: CC's: 2 Cent Cay, 8 I, 2 M. White-throated Sparrow: CC's: 40 Cent Cay, 31 E, 80 G, 108 I, 42 M, 119 WG. Fox Sparrow: 1 Cent Cay CC. Swamp Sparrow: CC's: 2 G, 9 I, 11 WG; 1 Niles Dec. 13; 1 Newark late Dec.; 2 Ithaca Jan. 2. Song Sparrow: CC's: 39 Cent Cay, 16 E, 66 G, 61 I, 70 M, 27 WG. Lapland Longspur: CC's: 2 G, 2 I, 1 M; 2 Elmira Dec. 4; 1 Clifton Springs Jan. 25; 7 King Ferry Jan.; 1 Sheldrake Feb. 1; 35 Penn Yan. Snow Bunting: reported on all CC's and from Loon L. Steuben Co., Clifton Springs, Newark, Slaterville.

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REGION 4 — SUSQUEHANNA

LESLIE E. BEMONT

In spite of January with its almost month-long spell of severe weather, the winter, on average, was fairly mild. Several daily low temperature records were broken and there were frequent heavy snowfalls in January but December was warmer than normal and February was really mild, sometimes truly balmy. A warm February is still February so the melting of the heavy snow cover, while rapid, was interrupted enough to keep severe flooding to a minimum.

It was not a particularly good winter for raptors, though Red-tailed Hawks and Am. Kestrels were at least up to normal and accipiters seem to increase a little each year. Speaking of accipiters, Goshawks would have been reckoned rarities in this Region 20 years ago but now outnumber Cooper's Hawks and approach Sharp-shins in reports received, although that is at least partly because they are more conspicuous. The three Marsh Hawk reports are encouraging.

One report of an apparently winter-killed Carolina Wren appeared in a Binghamton newspaper during January but two birds were still coming to a feeder in Vestal at the end of the month. A less equivocal estimate of the effect on the species of our first prolonged severe winter weather in three or four years will have to wait until breeding season. There was no evidence of a significant effect on Tufted Titmice or Mockingbirds and a Brown Thrasher made it thru February.

Wintering White-throated Sparrows and Dark-eyed Juncos seemed particularly numerous and Am. Robins above normal, but after early January the only pre-migration Icterids were Brown-headed Cowbirds and they were none too numerous. Of the winter finches only Evening Grosbeaks and Common Redpolls appeared in numbers but all the reasonably possible species were reported.

The warm February temperatures brought a real rush of Canada Geese during the last few days of the month and several exclamations about "the largest flock, ever." Of the small land birds only Red-winged Blackbirds had responded in real numbers by the end of the period but most of the normally early migrants had been reported.

The Bald Eagles at Cannonsville Reservoir can't properly be classed as rarities since they are reported there more years than not, but in this region a Gray Catbird and a Yellow-rumped Warbler in winter and Red-bellied Woodpeckers at any season can be so classified.

Special abbreviations: BCC—Binghamton Christmas Count, Dec. 28; GCC—Greene Christmas Count (unpublished), Dec. 26; OCC—Oneonta Christmas Count, Dec. 20; TCC—Tioga County (Owego) Christmas Count, Jan. 1.

Observers: Cutler and Jeanette Baldwin, Bill Bartlett, L. Barnhart, Reynolds Bennett, Ann Casselberry, Mildred Clark, Warren and Gail Corderman, Anna and Marilyn Davis, Warren and Louise Dean, Robert Dirig, Mary Dobinsky, Sadie Dorber, Chris Frye, Clare Gottschall, Shirley Hartman, Elva Hawken, Dorothy House, Don Huntington, Paul Kalka, Eugene and Cindy Kirch, Margaret Layton, Florence Linaberry, M. and L. McDowell, Betty McViney, Harriet Marsi, Rick Marsi, John New, Robert and Rita Pantle, Booth Perkins, H. Robison, Gail Rubin, Robert and Jeanne Saunders, Jerry Shannon, Robert and Mary Sheffield, E. and B. Vermilya, Elizabeth Washburn, Don Weber, Ruth and Sally White, Evelyn Williams and Kathryn Wilson.

LOONS—DUCKS: Pied-billed Grebe: 1 Nichols Jan. 18. Great Blue Heron: 1 BCC; 1 Whitney Point Dec. 7; Owego in early Jan. Canada Goose: 75 TCC; 1 Binghamton Jan. 13; 7 Harpursville Jan. 18; migrants Feb. 17 and unusually large numbers migrating Feb. 26 to 29. Snow Goose: 1 Walton Jan. 17 (SH). Mallard: 10 OCC; 3 GCC; 119 BCC; 1 TCC; 200 or more wintering at Sherburne Nature Center. Black Duck: 2 OCC; 2 GCC; 65 BCC; 1 TCC; 60 at Sherburne. Pintail: Owego Dec. 11; 1 Cannonsville Reservoir Feb. 8. Am. Wigeon: Owego Dec. 16. Wood Duck: 1 Sherburne Jan. 17. Redhead: 6 Cannonsville Reservoir Feb. 8. Ring-necked Duck: 3 TCC. Canvasback: 1 Reflection Bay, near Oneonta, Dec. 6; 1 Whitney Point Dec. 7; 10 Cannonsville Reservoir Feb. 8; Feb. 28 Whitney Point. Common Goldeneye: 2 BCC; 22 Waterfowl Census total for Region. Bufflehead: 1 OCC. White-winged Scoter: 1 Cannonsville Reservoir Feb. 8. Common Merganser: 10 GCC; 1 TCC; 40 Whitney Point Dec. 14, best count for period.

HAWKS—ALCIDS: Goshawk: 3 GCC; 1 TCC; 1 Choconut Center, north of Johnson City, Jan. 4 and 11; 1 Sherburne Jan. 15; Owego Jan. 19. Sharp-shinned Hawk: 2 GCC; 1 TCC; 7 other reports. Cooper's Hawk: 1 GCC; 3 other reports. Red-tailed Hawk: 1 OCC; 2 GCC; 3 BCC; 3 TCC; frequent reports all period. Red-shouldered Hawk: 1 TCC; no others. Rough-legged Hawk: 1 OCC; 1 BCC; 1 Oneonta Jan. 31; the only reports. Bald Eagle: 1 to 3 around Cannonsville Reservoir all winter. Marsh Hawk: Jan. 8 Owego; 1 Oneonta Jan. 30; 1 Choconut Center Feb. 22, "a beautiful gray." Am. Kestrel: 4 OCC; 3 GCC; 12 BCC; 9 TCC. Ruffed Grouse: 2 GCC; 5 BCC. Ring-necked Pheasant: 1 GCC; 9 BCC. Turkey: 9 GCC; 25 or more Walton area Dec. 30; 4 E. Meredith Jan. 30; seen regularly at Tioga Co. Farm, 9 on Feb. 1. Killdeer: 2 BCC. Am. Woodcock: Feb. 20 near Binghamton. Herring Gull: 1 GCC; 21 BCC; 2 TCC. Ring-billed Gull: 1 BCC; 1 TCC.

PIGEONS—WOODPECKERS: Rock Dove: 548 BCC; 275 TCC. Mourning Dove: 38 OCC; 7 GCC; 95 BCC; 81 TCC. Screech Owl: 2 BCC; reports from 5 localities. Great Horned Owl: 1 OCC; 3 GCC; 20 BCC; 3 TCC. Barred Owl: 2 GCC; 1 BCC; nearly every night during Feb. near Binghamton. Saw-whet Owl: 1 Delhi Jan. 16 (HB, LBa). Belted Kingfisher: 1 OCC; 1 GCC; 8 BCC; 4 TCC. Common Flicker: 1 W. Davenport, near Oneonta, Dec. 28 (DH). Pileated Woodpecker: 2 GCC; 1 BCC. Red-headed Woodpecker: 1 BCC, an immature bird seen for at least a week after the census. RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER: 1 TCC; 2 in Candor area during Jan. (DW). Hairy Woodpecker: 33 OCC; 7 GCC; 25 BCC; 21 TCC. Downy Woodpecker: 38 OCC; 11 GCC; 70 BCC; 39 TCC.

FLYCATCHERS—STARLINGS: Horned Lark: 50 BCC; 56 TCC. Blue Jay: 168 OCC; 150 GCC; 333 BCC; 224 TCC. Crow: 277 OCC; 300 GCC; 547 BCC; 394 TCC. Black-capped Chickadee: 437 OCC; 193 GCC; 508 BCC; 237 TCC. BOREAL CHICKADEE: 3 OCC; regular during Dec. in 2 Oneonta localities (BMcV, GR); 1 at Hamden, in Delaware Co., Feb. 3 (M, LMcD). Tufted Titmouse: 27 BCC; 33 TCC; present thru Feb. White-breasted Nuthatch: 43 OCC; 7 GCC; 69 BCC; 42 TCC. Red-breasted Nuthatch: 8 OCC; 2 GCC; 3 BCC; 2 TCC. Brown Creeper: 5 OCC; 1 GCC; 12 BCC; 3 TCC. Winter Wren: 2 BCC;

Dec. 15 Owego. Carolina Wren: 4 BCC; 3 TCC; 1 found dead reported to Binghamton Press in mid-Jan.; 2 at Vestal at least thru Jan. 30; 1 at Delancey, in Delaware Co., Jan. 4. Mockingbird: 1 OCC; 14 GCC; 6 TCC; all winter at 3 Triple Cities localities and Delhi and in Jan. at Owego; 1 at Choconut Center looking over suet but not really eating it. GRAY CATBIRD: 1 Owego Jan. 4 (RB), good description and details. Brown Thrasher: 1 Delhi Jan. 27 and all winter (M, LMcD). Am. Robin: 5 OCC; 1 GCC; 3 BCC; 1 TCC; 6 Candor Jan. 18 and a dozen other winter reports until migrants Feb. 25. E. Bluebird: TCC, within count period; 1 Hancock Feb. 27. Golden-crowned Kinglet: 4 GCC; 17 BCC. Ruby-crowned Kinglet: Dec. 11 Owego. Cedar Waxwing: 1 GCC; 25 TCC; very few reported. Northern Shrike: 2 GCC; 1 Jan. 4 Choconut Center caught a small bird that glanced off a window; 4 other reports. Starling: 915 OCC; 700 GCC; 8320 BCC; 1075 TCC.

VIREOS—WARBLERS: YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER: 1 OCC (MD).

WEAVERS—SPARROWS: House Sparrow: 332 OCC; 300 GCC; 580 BCC; 714 TCC. E. Meadowlark: 2 GCC; 20 BCC; 6 TCC. Red-winged Blackbird: Dec. 27 and into Jan. Owego and a few earlier Dec. records, but then none until Feb. 13 and numerous migrants Feb. 21. Rusty Blackbird: 2 TCC. Common Grackle: 2 OCC; 3 TCC; then none until Feb. 21; only a few migrants before the end of Feb. Brown-headed Cowbird: 2 OCC; 2 BCC; 15 TCC; small numbers all winter. Cardinal: 42 OCC; 11 GCC; 122 BCC; 89 TCC. Evening Grosbeak: 1100 OCC; 200 GCC; 437 BCC; 415 TCC; plentiful, but not overwhelming, all period. Purple Finch: 10 OCC; 3 GCC; 31 BCC; small numbers all winter. House Finch: 78 BCC; regular at several Triple Cities feeders all winter, as has become usual; a single bird at Delhi Dec. 22 to Jan. 31 (LMcD); 1 on Dec. 8 and a pair regularly from Jan. 9 on at one Oneonta locality and 1 at another Jan. 31. Pine Grosbeak: 18 OCC; 12 TCC; other scattered reports thruout period. Common Redpoll: 175 GCC; 217 BCC; 63 TCC; first reported Dec. 17 Vestal; after Christmas seen everywhere, max. count 200 Sherburne Jan. 15. Pine Siskin: 10 OCC; 2 BCC; max. 16 Binghamton Jan. 1 but present all period. Am. Goldfinch: 5 OCC; 42 GCC; 198 BCC; 106 TCC. Red Crossbill: 8 Oneonta Dec. 13, the only report. White-winged Crossbill: 9 BCC; 80 or more in 2 flocks near Hartwick Jan. 31. Dark-eyed Junco: 86 OCC; 42 GCC; 253 BCC; 213 TCC. Tree Sparrow: 178 OCC; 170 GCC; 350 BCC; 213 TCC. Field Sparrow: 1 regularly at Owego during Dec. (W,LD). White-throated Sparrow: 6 OCC; 65 BCC; 16 TCC; wintering birds more common than usual. Fox Sparrow: 1 TCC; Feb. 28 Choconut Center. Swamp Sparrow: 6 OCC; 2 TCC; the only reports. Song Sparrow: 41 OCC; 2 GCC; 7 BCC; 12 TCC. Snow Bunting: 50 BCC; 1525 TCC; only 5 other reports, all late Dec. thru Jan.

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REGION 5 — ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

FRITZ G. SCHEIDER

For winter birding this past season, Region 5 birders were best advised to go to the coast—or better yet, to Corsica or Cozumel or Costa Rica—any place but central New York. Lord, it was a dull, dull, deadly dull winter for birds, a season made worse by the severe cold (January was 9.1° F (5° C) colder than average) and deep snow (18-24 inches (.46-.61 m) of persistent ground snow thru January) that began with the local Christmas Counts and didn't let up until mid-February. The local graybeards described it as "an old-fashioned winter" and they can have it. The severe icing over of the rivers and lakes forced out most of the December-early January waterfowl, particularly the less hardy dabblers; the lack of mice coupled with persistent deep snow squeezed out the residue of raptors that had tried

to remain locally; the deep snow and extended cold killed off most of the half-hardy species by late January; the seed and berry crop was exhausted or snow covered about the same time so most of the winter finches wisely shifted elsewhere. This exodus of major groups of wintering species plus an already thin population of winter woodland birds (woodpeckers, jays, chickadees, nuthatches, creepers, kinglets) made early and mid-February birding an exercise in endurance linked with futility; if the local birder was morose and atrabilious then, believe me, he had just and adequate cause. No wonder the first migrants (Canada Goose, Am. Robin, Icterids) were greeted with wide-eyed enthusiasm when spring sprung on February 21-22.

The few positives for the winter include 1) better numbers of wintering Gadwall, Ring-necked Duck, Canvasback, Greater Scaup, and White-winged Scoter; 2) a fair flight of Glaucous and Iceland Gulls; 3) an irruption of Bohemian Waxwings and, to a lesser extent, of Boreal Chickadees and Northern Shrikes; 4) a December flight of winter finches, unfortunately not sustained into January or augmented in February; and 5) early return of numbers of migrants, particularly Canada Goose, Pintail, and Icterids.

Negatives are many: 1) few wintering dabblers; 2) much reduced numbers of the true "winter" ducks, especially Bufflehead, Oldsquaw, and all three mergansers; 3) scant hawk numbers, probably secondary to the combination of little prey and much snow; 4) a paucity of winter woodland birds; 5) a near wipe-out of half-hardies locally; 6) some attrition in the ranks of the southerners, most marked in Carolina Wren and Tufted Titmouse; 7) much reduced wintering sparrows, including both the half-hardy species and the normally wintering Tree Sparrows and Dark-eyed Juncos.

Rare species for the season include Harlequin Duck, King Eider, Golden Eagle, Bald Eagle, Spotted Sandpiper, Boreal Chickadee, Eastern Bluebird, Bohemian Waxwing, and Northern Oriole.

Abbreviations: DH—Derby Hill near Texas; FH—Fair Haven, Cayuga Co.; SSSP—Selkirk Shores State Park near Port Ontario; SRF—Seneca River flats near Montezuma; WFC—Waterfowl Census; HIGMA—Howland's Island Game Management Area near Port Byron.

Compilers are D. Crumb, P. A. DeBenedictis, and G. Huggins.

Contributors are B. and A. Brosseau, G. and M. Church, K. Coyle, G. Maxwell, B. and S. Peebles, J. Propst, T. Riley, M. Rusk, M. Stooks, T. Dittrich, J. and E. VanDresar, and C. Wernick. Many thanks to the above for their help.

LOONS—DUCKS: Horned Grebe: 17 on state WFC, primarily from Skaneateles L. Double-crested Cormorant: three-five wintering at Oswego Harbor, most unusual as heretofore singles only were the rule.

Mute Swan: adult present to Jan. 1 at SSSP when freeze-up there forced it out. Canada Goose: first arrivals Feb. 21 with 2000+ at Syracuse; max. 10,000+ at Seneca River flats Feb. 28-29. Black Duck: up slightly on state WFC—206; not present as a wintering species at either Brewerton or Baldwinsville where it has been entirely displaced by the welfare state Mallards. Gadwall: max. wintering 55 Jan. 11 at Oswego Harbor, an excellent winter tally. Wood Duck: three individuals, all females, wintered—two at FH, one at Fulton.

Redhead: Feb. max. 360 FH—SRF Feb. 29; all winter tallies less than 100. Ring-necked Duck: 17 on state WFC, much above average. Canvasback: 808 on state WFC at Skaneateles L. must have moved out by Jan. 31 as the open water of that lake had been reduced to only a few duckless acres by the severe freezing in mid and late January.

Bufflehead: miserable counts thru winter—max. 70 Feb. 28 DH-FH. Oldsquaw: like Bufflehead, a terrible winter for this species—max. only 182 Oswego Harbor Feb. 1. HARLEQUIN DUCK: a female and an immature male Feb. 1 and Feb. 8 respectively at Oswego Harbor. KING EIDER: only reports one Jan. 11 FH and two Jan. 30 Oswego Harbor—

scarce. White-winged Scoter: max. 110 Feb. 8 Oswego Harbor, a very high count, particularly so considering the severity of the winter. Common Merganser: much, much reduced—max. only 1250 Feb. 1 Oswego Harbor; in severe winters heretofore, the counts there have reached 4000 to 5000.

HAWKS—ALCIDS: Goshawk: very scarce—Dec. six, Jan. four, Feb. none away from DH. Sharp-shinned Hawk: 12 for the period, up somewhat.

Red-tailed Hawk: 32 on Oneida Christmas Count; daily tallies three-13/day, not a large number for the species locally. Rough-legged Hawk: quite scarce this winter—usually one-three/day; max. only six Dec. 21 Clay Swamp-Onondaga L. **GOLDEN EAGLE:** first year bird Jan. 1 **HIGMA.** **BAID EAGLE:** an adult Jan. 18 north of Port Ontario only report. Marsh Hawk: few in Dec., none in Jan. and Feb., probably the negative combination of few mice and deep snow. American Kestrel: scarce—only three-nine/day until migrants appeared in last ten days of February. Ring-necked Pheasant: continues scarce—only five-nine/day and some sectors of the various Christmas Counts found none this year.

SPOTTED SANDPIPER: Nov. thru Dec. 2 one Holland Patent (J&E VanDresar); also one Dec. 7 near Eaton (G&M Church), both amazingly late dates as the species is normally gone by Oct. 10.

Glaucous and Iceland Gulls: fair flight—max. seven Glaucous and 13 Iceland Feb. 1 Oswego Harbor, actually rather poor numbers considering the severity of the winter. Great Black-backed Gull: winter max. 370 Feb. 1 Oswego Harbor. Herring and Ring-billed Gulls: winter max. 8000 Herring Jan. 1 Oswego and 7500 Ring-billed Feb. 28 at FH—Little Sodus Bay; counts of thousands (1000-2500) of Ring-billed Gulls persisting thru Jan. at Oswego Harbor were unusual as the species normally evacuates that area in mid-Jan. in severe winters, returning again in mid to late Feb.

PIGEONS—WOODPECKERS: Mourning Dove: up on most Christmas Counts, e.g. 466 on Oneida Christmas Counts; however, much scarcer during the severe cold of Jan., and away from feeders, almost rare in Feb. Snowy Owl: only three individuals for season, a non-flight year. The marked scarcity of mice is locally reflected in the total absence of reported Long-eared, Short-eared, and Saw-whet Owls.

Common Flicker: max. 12 near Camillus Dec. 28; scarce thru Jan. and Feb. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: immature at Oneida in Jan. is the only winter report.

FLYCATCHERS—STARLINGS: Horned Lark: 100+ Jan. 1 near Oriskany and 125 Feb. 24 near Pompey; otherwise very scant, particularly in Feb. when numerous migrant flocks might be expected. Blue Jay: quite scarce locally with 10-12/day the usual counts; a group of 77 Jan. 7-8 Fabius is an exception; Adirondack numbers apparently fairly good—68 at Big Moose Jan. 2. **BOREAL CHICKADEE:** one-three/day in dense spruce plantations at Shackleton Point, SSSP, and Highland Forest; not noted on the few Adirondack reports. Red-breasted Nuthatch: very scarce and confined to conifer plantations with one-two/day only reported.

Carolina Wren: numbers present thru Dec.; the few present at feeders at Syracuse survived but the birds at peripheral locations (FH, SSSP, Pulaski, Marietta) seem to have been wiped out by the severe cold and deep persistent snow of Jan. Winter Wren: present in Dec. but like most of the half-hardies virtually eliminated by the cold and snow of Jan.

Mockingbird: present in DeWitt, N. Syr., Syr.—seems to have survived better than the other "southerners," Tufted Titmouse and Carolina Wren. American Robin: small flocks (10-75/day) in the southern valleys but numbers way down from the last few years. **EASTERN BLUEBIRD:** five Jan. 1 **HIGMA,** one of the few local wintering records. Golden-crowned Kinglets: extraordinarily scarce—two-four/day only and many conifer plantations, though populated with some Black-capped Chickadees, had no kinglets whatever.

BOHEMIAN WAXWING: an impressive irruption which crested (?waxed) in Dec. waned in Jan.—100 Dec. 13, 115 Dec. 14 near Port Ontario with lesser numbers there until the end of the month; however, the flight quickly moved on as berries became snow covered and Jan. and Feb. tallies were of the one-two/day type and usually noted in small groups of Cedar Waxwings. Northern Shrike: 22 individuals in Dec., 12 in Jan., and 8 in Feb., a perfect reflection of their decline thru the season here with the loss of mice and the rising snow.

WARBLERS—VIREOS: Yellow-rumped Warblers and Common Yellowthroat reported in Dec. on the earlier Christmas Counts but none survived to be recorded in Jan.

WEAVERS—SPARROWS: NORTHERN ORIOLE: adult male in breeding plumage Dec. 7 near SSSP, the landbird equivalent of those crazy Dec. Spotted Sandpipers. First influx of migrant Icterids (Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird) Feb. 19-21 with 85,000+ Feb. 29 at Onondaga L. Rusty Blackbird: one-three/day at marsh springs and sewage seeps in Fayetteville-DeWitt area.

Winter finches were varied and moderately abundant thru Dec. but Jan. and Feb. tallies, aside from Evening Grosbeak and Common Redpoll, were wretchedly low. High tallies for Evening Grosbeak were 125 Dec. 12 and 27 and for Common Redpoll 200+ Jan. and Feb., all at Pompey. Pine Grosbeaks in variable numbers—77 Jan. 25 near Brookfield, 125 Jan. 2 near Fabius, "large flocks" at Holland Patent; however, scarce (six-25/day) on the Ontario lake plain. Other winter finches very scarce—Purple Finch usually singles, one flock of 15; Pine Siskin max. 36 Jan. 17 near Pompey; American Goldfinch 75 Dec. 17-Jan. 1 Pompey; Red Crossbill 43 Dec. 14 SSSP; White-winged Crossbill none.

Wintering half-hardy sparrows severely reduced by the persistent cold and deep snow of Jan. and early Feb.—peak field, i.e., non-feeder, numbers for comparison are White-throated Sparrow—Dec. 16, Jan. eight, Feb. one; for Swamp Sparrow—Dec. five, Jan. two, Feb. none; for Song Sparrow (usually the toughest of the lot)—Dec. 21, Jan. nine, Feb. four.

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REGION 6 — ST. LAWRENCE

LEE B. CHAMBERLAINE

Winter of 1975-76 was more severe than the previous three years. Temperatures ranged from a minus 40° F (4.4° C) to an unheard of 61° F (16° C) in February. Sub-zero temperatures were the rule and snowfall was a little behind last year's with up to 40 inches (1 m) at higher elevations at the end of the period—even with rain and thaws.

Winter finches were a disappointment to say the least, but many late hangers-on made up for the slack in finches. Ducks were better than last year and gulls in Massena just keep increasing.

Some real gems that upped enthusiasm if not the temperature were Red-necked Grebe, Long-eared & Short-eared Owl, and Bohemian Waxwing.

Localities: B-D—Brownville-Dexter; DH—Dry Hill; PP—Pillar Point; PtP—Pt. Peninsula; RMPD—Robt. Moses Power Dam; SB—Sherwins Bay; WI—Wellesley Island; WCC—Watertown Christmas Count.

Contributors: Tom L. & Cathy Carrolan; Lee B. Chamberlaine; Robt. C. & June Walker, Joannes A. VanRiet; OAS—Onondaga Audubon Society.

LOONS—DUCKS: Com. Loon: 1 SB Dec. 14. **RED-NECKED GREBE:** 1 Lewis Co.

along Black River on ground—photographed and released Stony Pt. Jan. 30 (LBC). Horned Grebe: 6 between SB & PP Dec. 14. Great Blue Heron: 1 Woodville Dec. 5 (LBC); 1 WCC Dec. 20 (Dick Brouse).

Canada Goose: 15 Dec. 30; 400 Dexter Marsh Jan. 1. Mallard: 40 RMPD Dec. 29. Black Duck: 260 RMPD Jan. 10. Gadwall: 2 RMPD Dec. 29; 12 PtP Jan. 1; 100+ Stony Point Jan. 3 (Joe Lamendola). Pintail: 2 RMPD Dec. 29. Am. Wigeon: 3 Dec. 21; 1 Feb. 21. Redhead: 2 SB Dec. 14. Canvasback: 1 Dec. 7; 2 Dec. 21; 5 WI Jan. 3; 6 PP Jan. 4; 18 PtP Jan. 11; 2 Feb. 4; 3 Feb. 8. Greater Scaup: 550 PP Dec. 14. Com. Goldeneye: 126 Jan. 10. Bufflehead: 1 Dec. 12; 1 Jan. 1; 1 Jan. 17; 2 Feb. 24. Oldsquaw: 300+ Clarks Pt. Jan. 18. **BLACK SCOTER**: 2 Chaumont Bay Dec. 14 (RCW). Com. Merganser: 4440 RMPD (JAV). Red-breasted Merganser: 1 Feb. 21.

HAWKS—ALCIDS: Goshawk: 1 adult Paddy Hill Dec. 21; 1 imm. PtP Jan. 4; 1 adult PtP Jan. 11 (TLC). Sharp-shinned Hawk: 1 Reynolds Rd. Jan. 3 (TLC). Red-tailed Hawk: more this winter than past two. Rough-legged Hawk: 37 Chaumont Bay area Jan. 17 (RCW); 44 PtP—OAS field trip Jan. 30 (TLC & Dave Muir). **BALD EAGLE**: 1 Eel Bay Dec. 20 (C. Devan); 4 Oak Point Jan. 14 (A. LaFave); 3 (1 adult, 2 imm.) Oak Point (RCW). Marsh Hawk: 7 Chaumont—Pt. Salubrious Rd. Dec. 14 (RCW); 3 WCC Dec. 20. Am. Kestrel: many wintering; max. 6 Jan. 1. Ruffed Grouse: numbers up—27 Dec. 1 (LBC); 15 in tree Dec. 21 (JAV). Gray Partridge: more coveys than last 3 years; max. 19—Cape Vincent Jan. 17—others of 10-13 birds. **AM. COOT**—1 RMPD Dec. 21 (JAV). Turkey: 17 WI Jan. 3; 16 WI Jan. 30 OAS (TLC); game farm birds. Com. Snipe: 5 BD Feb. 28 (TLC). **GLAUCOUS GULL**: 33 (22 imm. 11 adults) Jan. 6; 7 Feb. 25 (JAV). **ICELAND GULL**: 13 imm; 2 adults RMPD Jan. 6; 29 imm. Jan. 17; 3 imm. Feb. 25 (JAV). Great Black-backed Gull: 1240 RMPD Jan. 10; 260 Feb. 1; 10 Feb. 25 (JAV). **RING-BILLED GULL**: 1 wintering RMPD (JAV).

PIGEONS—WOODPECKERS: Mourning Dove: more wintering than last year—not as many as 2 years ago. Screech Owl: 1 WCC Dec. 20; 1 Dec. 30; 1 Jan. 3. Great Horned Owl: 4 WCC Dec. 20; 4 Jan. 3. Snowy Owl: max. 5 PtP Jan. 1; not as many as last winter. **LONG-EARED OWL**: 1 Blake Sanctuary Feb. 21 (Nick Leone). **SHORT-EARED OWL**: 2 WCC Dec. 20 (TLC); 5 PP Dec. 28 (LBC). Com. Flicker: 1 DH Dec. 12 (RCW). Pileated Woodpecker: 3 reports.

FLYCATCHERS—STARLINGS: Horned Lark: 99 WCC Dec. 20; 188 Alex. Bay Jan. 3. **GRAY JAY**: 1 Massena Dec. 30 (JAV) very unusual. Blue Jay: 90 Dec. 30 (JAV). Crow: more wintered than usual (LBC). **MOCKINGBIRD**: 1 feeding on magnolia seed thru Jan. 10 Watertown (Paul Biggers); 1 Stony Point Jan. 18 (LBC). Am. Robin: very few this winter. **BOHEMIAN WAXWING**: 400 DH Feb. 17 & 28 (RCW); 18 DH Feb. 26 (RCW). Cedar Waxwing: 8 Stony Pt. Jan. 24 (TLC). Northern Shrike: good year—more than usual—adults predominated.

WEAVERS—SPARROWS: E. Meadowlark: 1 WCC (RCW); 1 Reynolds Rd. Jan. 3 (TLC); 2 near Alex. Bay Jan. 3 (TLC). Red-winged Blackbird: 1 Massena Dec. 30; 450 B-D Feb. 25. Brown-headed Cowbird: 2 Feb. 26—not many wintering. Cardinal: 44 WCC; 3 at feeders all winter Massena (JAV). Evening Grosbeak: 293 WCC; 316 Dec. 30 not as many as last year—spotty. Pine Grosbeak: 1 WCC; 12 Dec. 7; 24 Dec. 30; 7 Watertown Feb. 2. Com. Redpoll: max. 80+ PtP Jan. 4 scattered—more north of Watertown than south. Pine Siskin: 20 Dec. 13; 9 Dec. 30; 2 B-D Feb. 23. Am. Goldfinch: many small flocks wintered—up to max. 50 ± **RUFOSIDED TOWHEE**: 3 WCC (Lucile Grant)—very unusual. White-throated Sparrow: 2 WCC; 1 PtP Jan. 1. Song Sparrow: 1 WCC. Lapland Longspur: 2 near Alex. Bay Jan. 3; (TLC); 8 Reynolds Rd. Alex. Bay Jan. 3 (TLC); 2 Massena Feb. 25. Snow Bunting: max. 900/day.

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REGION 7 – ADIRONDACK-CHAMPLAIN

THEODORE D. MACK

This was a cold winter. December 15 to January 23 held many very cold days and -20°F (-29°C) was common. Newcomb and Saranac Lake had -43°F (-42°C) on different days for the coldest readings in our area. Cones and beechnuts were absent or scarce so inland birding was poor as might be expected.

Robert McKinney writes of his Indian Lake trip Feb. 13-15 saying, "Where are all the birds in the Adirondacks this winter? The feeders we usually check just had chickadees." Dorothy McIlroy writes of a February weekend at Piseco Lake. "Very few birds around this winter. Usually there is a flock of Evening Grosbeaks, but this winter they have seen just one for a couple of days in December. . . . no woodpeckers at the suet and neither White-breasted Nuthatches nor Dark-eyed Juncos. Saw no birds at all when we were hiking on the Northville-Placid Trail and the Deer Pond Trail." A number of people had no news of birds. However, Lake Champlain and the Christmas Counts had some interesting birds.

Observers: Deborah Anson, Bart Bailey, Geoffrey Carleton, Norman Mason, Betsy & John MacMillan, Dorothy McIlroy, Margaret & Robert McKinney, Dan Nickerson, John Parkes, John M. C. Peterson, Jerry Rosenband, Carole Slatkin, Pat Taber, Elizabethtown Christmas Bird Count Dec. 27, Essex Co., N.Y. portion only of Ferrisburg, Vt. Christmas Bird Count Dec. 20, New York State Waterfowl Count Lake Champlain section Jan. 10, Saranac Lake Christmas Bird Count Jan. 3.

LOONS-DUCKS: Pied-billed Grebe: 3 Westport Jan. 4 (GC). Canada Goose: 2 Essex Jan. 25 (BB,JP); 40 McColloms Feb. 22 flying north (TM); and broadcast on television that many other flocks were reported by others. Open water rather scarce this time of year in most of our area. Black Duck: max. 155 Westport Jan. 4 (GC). Wood Duck: 1 male LaChute Feb. 7 (B&JM). Ring-necked Duck: 5 FCBC; 1 LaChute Jan. 31-Feb. 8 (B&JM). Canvas-back: 1800 NYSWC. Common Goldeneye: 90 NYSWC. Oldsquaw: 20 NYSWC. Hooded Merganser: 1 Essex late Jan. (BB); 1 LaChute Jan. 31-Feb. 8 (B&JM). Common Merganser: 22 NYSWC; 1 Essex Feb. 20 (JP).

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Goshawk: several seen. Sharp-shinned Hawk: 1 Essex Jan. 3 (JR, CS). Red-tailed Hawk: several E'town to Champlain Valley. Rough-legged Hawk: several Champlain region plus 1 ECBC. Bald Eagle: 1 imm. Port Kent Jan. 10 (DA,JP,PT). Ring-necked Pheasant: 1 ECBC. American Coot: 1 wintered at Essex until it was found dead Feb. 2 (BB,JP). Bonaparte's Gull: 5 FCBC.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Mourning Dove: 2 FCBC; 57 ECBC; 1 Averyville Jan. 6 (GC). Great Horned Owl: a few reports; 1 Crown Pt. Feb. 17 had much white on face and not tan with all of forepart light gray indicating the subspecies *B. v. wapacuthu* of the far north; GC studied the perched bird. Hairy Woodpecker: max. 20 ECBC. Downy Woodpecker: max. 44 ECBC. Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker: 1 SLCBC.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Horned Lark: 11 FCBC; 1 Cedar River Feb. 14 (R&MMc). Blue Jay: max. 147 ECBC. Raven: one or two at usual places. Crow: 85 migrants headed north over E'town Feb. 28 (GC). Mockingbird: 3 Dec. 20 Plattsburgh CBC at meeting place and seen by all for first species of day. Gray Catbird: 1 SLCBC. Brown Thrasher: 1 SLCBC. American Robin: 1 ECBC; 1 Indian Lake Feb. 14 (R&MMc). SWAINSON'S THRUSH: seen at 15 feet with 7 x 35 binoculars at Essex Dec. 20 by DA, JP, PT; all know the bird and know it is totally out of season. "No rufous . . . head, back, wings, and tail of dark olive brown. . . . large, buffy eye-ring clearly noted by all as bird fed on barberries." Cedar Waxwing: 39 FCBC. Northern Shrike: 3 SLCBC; 1 Westport (JP,PT); 1 Lewis (DN).

VIREOS—WARBLERS: None: this is usually a very easy section to write for the winter season.

WEAVERS—SPARROWS: Red-winged Blackbird: a few winter in Clinton Co. near the lake; 8 migrants Lewis Feb. 22 (DN); and common at Essex and Westport by Feb. 26 (JP). Brown-headed Cowbird: 50 FCBC; 45 SLCBC; 1 at a Piseco L. feeder Feb. (DMc). Cardinal: 5 SLCBC; 4 ECBC; 12 FCBC. Evening Grosbeak: max. 144 ECBC; absent many areas. Purple Finch: only 2 reports. Pine Grosbeak: 23 SLCBC; 35 ECBC; 44 Moriah (NM); many others. Common Redpoll: max. 242 ECBC; scattered flocks seen in most areas. Pine Siskin: 67 ECBC and absent in much of region. American Goldfinch: max. 48 FCBC and generally scarce. White-winged Crossbill: absent. Red Crossbill: 2 ECBC. Rufous-sided Towhee: 2 FCBC. Tree Sparrow: max. 105 ECBC; scarce or absent many inland areas. White-throated Sparrow: 2 FCBC; 1 ECBC. Song Sparrow: 1 ECBC. Snow Bunting: max. 86 FCBC; 54 ECBC.

Paul Smiths, New York 12970

REGION 8 — HUDSON-MOHAWK

GLADYS SNELL

The winter was relatively mild with the exception of the below normal temperatures of late January and early February (-18 degrees Fahrenheit (-28° C) with wind chill of -55° F (-48° C) and -63° F (-53° C) on two occasions). Many species were noticeably decreased following this period. A mild late February brought "early spring invasion" a little ahead of normal. Earlier predictions that the 1975-76 season would be a "finch year" were confirmed when eight of the nine species of finches which might reasonably be expected were observed. Only White-winged Crossbill went unreported. Two species, Common Redpoll and Pine Siskins were reported in record numbers by the Southern Rensselaer Christmas Count.

There were five Christmas Counts this year: Columbia County and Schenectady on December 20; Southern Rensselaer County December 27; Troy and Amsterdam (a new "trial" count) January 3. Some of the highlights of these were: Red-bellied Woodpecker, a first, and a White-crowned Sparrow, a second appearance for the Schenectady count; Winter and Carolina Wrens in Southern Rensselaer, a first for both; Savannah Sparrow in Troy; and three Lapland Longspurs in Amsterdam.

A few uncommon or unusual sightings were reported: a Glaucous Gull December 27 on the Hudson River at Greenport; an Iceland Gull February 29 on the Hudson River at New Baltimore; a Short-eared Owl January 1 in Amsterdam; a Gray Catbird December 20 in Chatham. The rarity of the season was a Harris' Sparrow in Chatham for most of the period.

Abbreviations: A—Amsterdam; cc or ccs—Christmas Count or Counts; Col Co—Columbia County (Alan DeVoe Bird Club); D-A-B—Dial-A-Bird; EG—East Greenbush; FR—Five Rivers Environmental Education Center; HR—Hudson River; LG—Lake George; L6—Lock 6 Mohawk River; mob—many observers; NB—New Baltimore; RL—Round Lake; S—Schenectady; SR—Southern Rensselaer; thru—throughout period or through date given; T—Troy.

LOONS—DUCKS: Horned Grebe: 1 late Dec. LG; 2 Feb. 28, 29 HR at NB. Pied-billed Grebe: 2 Feb. 28, 29 HR at NB. Great Blue Heron: thru Dec. Col. Co.; 1 Sc. Canada Goose: large flock Dec. 12 Chatham; 8 Col. Co. cc; many reports Feb. 21-26. Mallard: 759 ccs. Black Duck: 852 ccs; many late Feb. HR Col. Co. Pintail: Dec. 8 Col. Co.; 10 Feb. 18, 19

and several flocks Feb. 28, 29 HR at NB. Blue-winged Teal: 3 Feb. 29 HR Col. Co. Am. Wigeon: pair Feb. 19, 28 Col. Co.; Feb. 28, 29 HR at NB. Wood Duck: during Dec. and Jan. Col. Co. Ring-necked Duck: 2 early Dec. L6; Feb. 21 thru HR at NB. Canvasback: 23 Jan. 31 SL; hundreds Feb. 21 thru Col. Co. and HR at NB. Greater Scaup: 2 cc; Feb. 21 HR at NB. Common Goldeneye: 8 Jan. 31 SL; 4 Feb. 25 HR Col. Co.; hundreds Feb. 28, 29 SL. Bufflehead: Feb. 21 HR at NB; Feb. 28 Stockport Station Col. Co.; Surf Scoter: before cc LG. Hooded Merganser: Feb. 22 Stockport Station; 2 Feb. 28, 29 HR at NB. Common Merganser: 9 ccs; 1 Feb. 28, 29 HR at NB.

HAWKS—ALCIDS: Goshawk: 1 cc; Feb. 9 thru at EG, Saratoga Co., and NB. Sharp-shinned: 1 Jan. 13 FR; 3 Jan. thru Col. Co.; 1 thru Jan. Mechanicville; 3 Feb. 21 RL. Cooper's: 1 cc; thru Jan. and Feb. Col. Co.; Red-tailed: 1 Dec. 21, Feb. 15 EG; 4-5 all Dec. and 4-9 in Jan. Col. Co.; 56 ccs. Rough-legged: 2-3 all Dec. and early Feb. Col. Co.; 7 ccs. Marsh: Dec. 1-10 Col. Co. Am. Kestrel: thru Col. Co.; 38 ccs. Ruffed Grouse: Dec., Jan. Col. Co.; 7 ccs. Ring-necked Pheasant: thru Col. Co.; 2 Dec. 20 EG; 36 ccs. Am. Coot: Dec. 4, 17, 20 Col. Co. Killdeer: 15 Dec. 5 Col. Co.; many reports Feb. 20-29. Am. Woodcock: Feb. 21 Washington Co.; Feb. 23 NB. Herring Gull: 85 ccs; thru Col. Co. Ring-billed Gull: 23 ccs; Dec. and Feb. Col. Co.

PIGEONS—WOODPECKERS: Rock Dove: 1667 ccs. Mourning Dove; thru (mob); 1719 ccs. Owls: Screech: 4 ccs; 1 Jan. 12 EG; several late Feb. Burnt Hills (D-A-B). Great Horned: intermittent thru Col. Co.; 7 ccs. Barred: 1 Dec. 2 Col. Co.; 1 in Feb. Burnt Hills (D-A-B). Saw-whet: 1 Jan. 21 NB (D-A-B). Belted Kingfisher: thru Col. Co.; 10 ccs. Com. Flicker: thru Col. Co.; 10 ccs; Pileated Woodpecker: Dec. 9 and 17 EG; thru Col. Co.; ccs 6. **RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER:** 1 at feeder mid Dec. thru Feb. Voorheesville; 1 Scc. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: 1 Tcc. Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers: thru (mob).

FLYCATCHERS—STARLINGS: **E. PHOEBE:** 1 Col. Co. cc; Jan. 12, 13 FR. Horned Lark: thru (mob); 670 ccs. Blue Jay: thru (mob); 1004 ccs. Crow: flocks of up to 500 thru Col. Co.; 1271 ccs. Black-capped Chickadee: thru; 1708 ccs. **BOREAL CHICKADEE:** 1 Dec.-Feb. 12 Col. Co.; 3 feeder reports: Wilton, Averill Park, and Catskill (D-A-B), appears to be more common this year. Tufted Titmouse: thru; 164 ccs. White-breasted Nuthatch: thru; 279 ccs. Red-breasted Nuthatch: thru; 22 ccs. Brown Creeper: 1 Dec. 16 EG; 18 ccs; Jan., Feb. Col. Co. **WINTER WREN:** 5 ccs. **CAROLINA WREN:** 1 SRcc; Jan. 12 Slingerlands; Jan. 30 Old Chatham. Mockingbird: 51 ccs; thru SUNYA campus; 1 at feeder Schenectady. Brown Thrasher: 2 ccs. Am. Robin: intermittent thru; 42 ccs. Hermit Thrush: SRcc. E. Bluebird: thru Wildlife Research Center, Delmar; Dec. thru Jan. 26 Col. Co.; 6 Scc; 5 Feb. 11, 12 FR. Golden-crowned Kinglet: thru Dec. Col. Co.; 3 ccs. Ruby-crowned Kinglet: thru Dec. Col. Co. Cedar Waxwing: Dec. 20-Jan. Col. Co.; 1 Dec. 20 EG; flock of 10-12 Dec. 22 Delmar; 27 ccs. N. Shrike: 3 Dec. 1, 5, 7, 20 and 19 Feb. 1 Col. Co.; 1 immature Feb. 24 Amsterdam; 5 ccs. Starling: thru; 16308 ccs.

WEAVERS—SPARROWS: House Sparrow: thru; 2692 ccs. E. Meadowlark: small flock Dec. 1-31, up to 8 in Jan., to 6 in Feb. Col. Co.; 91 ccs; 40 Jan. 1 S. E. Montgomery Co. Red-winged Blackbird and Com. Grackle: mild weather in late Feb. brought these back to us earlier than normal (Feb. 20-25, normally they arrive in early March), although a few were with us thru. Brown-headed Cowbird: flocks up to 500 in Dec. many in Jan., and huge flocks in Feb. Col. Co.; 1139 ccs; thru (mob). Cardinal: thru; 586 ccs. Evening Grosbeak: thru; 995 ccs. Purple Finch: scattered few at feeders thru; 71 ccs. House Finch: thru (mob); 121 ccs. Pine Grosbeak: more reports than usual Jan. and Feb.; 92 SRcc. Com. Redpoll: many more reports than usual; 663 ccs. Pine Siskin: arrived earlier than usual in Nov. and in large numbers; 398 ccs. Am. Goldfinch: thru (mob). Red Crossbill: 6 SRcc. White-winged Crossbill: 10 Feb. 6 Mechanicville. Sparrows: Savannah: thru Jan. and Feb. 2-13 Col. Co.; 2 Tcc. Vesper: Dec. 1-3 Col. Co. Dark-eyed Junco; thru (mob); 978 ccs. Tree: a few intermittent at feeders; 1300 ccs. Field: few thru; 8 ccs. **HARRIS'** Dec. 25-Feb. 23 Chatham 1 imm. (W. Trimm, mob). White-crowned: Dec. 21-29 Spencerton; Jan. 16-20 Chatham;

5 ccs. White-throated: thru (mob); 311 ccs. Swamp: 4 ccs. Song: thru Col. Co.; 1 Feb. 29 Schenectady feeder; 107 ccs. 3 Lapland Longspur: Acc. Snow Bunting: flocks of 30-500 thru Jan. and Feb. (mob); 136 ccs.

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REGION 9 — DELAWARE-HUDSON

EDWARD D. TREACY

The season was very cold thru mid-February, when record high temperatures arrived. From mid-December thru the end of January, there was at least one major snowfall each week. The ground was continuously snow covered. Lakes were frozen by January, and remained so until the warm mid-February temperatures melted them. They remained open for the rest of the period. The Hudson froze quickly in December, but was also open by mid-February. Temperatures in Jan. were occasionally below 0° F (-17.8° C).

The season was characterized by an excellent incursion of northern finches, not as good as some years, but definitely better than most. The Federation Waterfowl Count fared well considering the amount of ice. The 19 species recorded was one less than last year, and only two less than the all time high of 21 in 1965. Most area Christmas counts did well, with more than the usual numbers of species and individuals recorded. No reports were received on the Rockland Christmas Count, and no reports were received at all in any way from Westchester. We need reporters badly from that county.

Contributors cited: Martin Borko, Robert F. Deed, Fred Hough, John C. Orth, Peter Polshek, Ken McDermott, John Tramontano, Eleanor Pink.

Observers cited: J,MK—Jim and Mary Key, Dan Smiley, Marion VanWagner, Helen Manson, Mary Yegella.

Abbreviations used: FDC—Federation Duck Count, Jan. 10-18; MCC—Mearns Bird Club Christmas Count, Dec. 27; WCC—Waterman Bird Club Christmas Count, Dec. 27.

LOONS—DUCKS: Red-throated Loon: 1 Ashokan Res. Nov. 29 (PP). Horned Grebe: high count of 56 on Ashokan Res. Dec. 27 was impressive. Single birds returned to area with thaw of mid-Feb. Pied-billed Grebe: a few wintered on open water. **DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT**: 1 MCC on Hudson at Highland Falls. Great Blue Heron: a few in open water. Canada Goose: a few very large flocks reported in late Feb. Numbers good thru end of period, with residents generally on location. Pintail: more wintering than usual. None on FDC. Green-winged Teal: 2 on FDC. Am. Wigeon: 2 on FDC. Wood Duck: 1 on FDC. Red-head: 2 on FDC, 2 at Cornwall Bay thru March. 50-60 Dec. 2 Rudd Pd. Dutch. (MY). Ring-necked Duck: good number of 121 on FDC. Scattered reports thru region for whole period. Canvasback: good numbers on Hudson thru period. 336 on FDC was half of last year's count but still good. 215 were on WCC. **TUFTED DUCK**: 1 Rockland L. from Feb. 29-Mar. 4 (Gene Brown, mob). Bufflehead: 27 was almost twice last year's FDC. Oldsquaw: single birds reported from several locations thru period. 1 on FDC, and another on Wappingers L. at end of period. White-winged Scoter: 3 Dec. 1 at Chelsea (JMK). Ruddy Duck: only 1 on FDC compared to max. of 394 last year. Hooded Merganser: 11 on FDC and several others on open water thru period. Common Merganser: 192 on FDC compared to 32 last year.

HAWKS—ALCIDS: Turkey Vulture: a few scattered reports in January would indicate possible wintering. 1 at Middletown on Feb. 19 was probably an early return. Most areas reported them by the end of season. Goshawk: a few reports thru season; 1 on MCC, 2 in

Dutch. in early Dec., and another at Freedom Plains Feb. 11. Sharp-shinned Hawk: the usual few reports thru season. Cooper's Hawk: 1 several times at Wawarsing, 1 at Wurtsboro thru Dec. and Jan. 1 at Stissing Dutch. Jan. 20. Red-shouldered Hawk: 1 Feb. 24 at Titusville Rd. Dutch. (KM). Rough-legged Hawk: average winter. **GOLDEN EAGLE**: 2 birds spent their third winter along Stissing Mt. near Thompson Pd., Dutch. Bald Eagle: 1 or 2 reports of Hudson R. birds. Max. 12 at Rio and Mongaup Res. in Sull. (8 adults, 4 imm.). 3 ad. and 1 imm. were at Rondout Res. Jan. 25. **MERLIN**: 1 on Feb. 16 near Pine Plains (Bob Goodrich). Am. Kestrel: very good numbers thru region for period. Bobwhite: 6 on WCC and reported daily in Dutch. 3 on MCC. Turkey: 10 near Mongaup Res. thru period. Virginia Rail: 2 in Dutch. Jan. 22 (1 on Fowler Rd. and the other on Canoo Rd.). Both adults (Forrest and Aline Romaro). Am. Coot: 163 on FDC. 65 on WCC. Am. Woodcock: FH reports 1 on Feb. 29 near Kripplebush. Probably the earliest record for Ulst. 5 birds in Dutch. the last week of Feb. the first on Feb. 25. **ICELAND GULL**: 1 vicinity of Kingston Pt. Hudson R. Jan. 31 (Al Brayton). Bonaparte's Gull: 2 on WCC and 1 on MCC.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Mourning Dove: numbers exceptionally good thru period. 584 on WCC and 306 on MCC. Barn Owl: 1 pr. with nearly fledged young at barn in Warwink was gone by Dec. 25. Another pr. at a railroad trestle near Chester in Dec. were later shot. Long-eared Owl: 1 Tallman Mt. swimming pool most of Feb. Saw-whet Owl: 1 heard at Mohonk L. Feb. 25. (DS). Common Flicker: usual few wintered. Red-bellied Woodpecker: continues to increase, 1 or 2 found on Christmas counts reporting. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: 1 from Jan. 18-25 in Upper Nyack.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: **GRAY JAY**: bird of last fall remained at Moore's Mills thru Jan. Another in late Dec. at Salt Point. 1 Livingston Manor Dec. 12. Fish Crow: 5 on WCC; 1 Kingston Pt. Dec. 27. **BOREAL CHICKADEE**: more reported than in recent years. At least 5 at Aeration Basin, Ashokan Res. thru period (PP). Tufted Titmouse: 101 on WCC. first bird of this species reported that count in 1958. 102 on MCC. Winter Wren: 1 on Jan. 21 at Fishkill (KM). 3 in Middletown repeatedly in Jan. and Feb. Carolina Wren: seems to have wintered well. Mockingbird: single bird on WCC in 1960, total this year was 119. Gray Catbird: 1 Jan. 30 E. Fishkill and another Jan. 6 Stissing. Brown Thrasher: 2 regularly thru period at 2 different locations in Dutch. Hermit Thrush: wintered again at Kripplebush (FH). 2 on WCC. Eastern Bluebird: 2-3 wintered at Wawarsing. 15-20 in Dutch. thru Feb. Northern Shrike: more repeated than usual. 1 near L. Welch Feb. 16, and another seen several times near Nyack. 1 on WCC and 3 others that Co. dur. Dec. 5 reports that Co. dur. Jan.

VIREOS-WARBLED: Yellow-rumped Warbler: 3 Dutch. reports in Jan. 1. Audubon race was at the DeOrsey feeder near Poughkeepsie from Feb. 5-9 (mob). Red-winged Blackbird: a few moved in in early Feb. Large flocks observed by Feb. 21. Northern Oriole: 1 Jan. 2 near Poughkeepsie. Cardinal: 117 on WCC. Only 14 in 1958. **INDIGO BUNTING**: 1 Dec. 13-19 at Pritchard's feeder in Pleasant Valley, Dutch. (MVW). House Finch: first on WCC in 1965, 1 bird. 140 obs. that count this year. Pine Grosbeak: several scattered reports. Max. 20 in Dutch. (MVW). 24 near Woodbourne, Sull. Jan. 13 (Valerie Freer). **HOARY REDPOLL**: 1 with flock of 150 Common Redpolls near Poughkeepsie Feb. 11 (MJK). Common Redpoll: not as common as some years, but well represented by several large flocks esp. in Feb. Pine Siskin: a few small flocks and several individuals reported from several feeders thru region. Red Crossbill: only report 1 Moore's Mills Jan. 8. (HM). White-winged Crossbill: 16 near Millbrook Jan. 23 (MJK). 8 in snow storm at Upper Nyack Feb. 2. Rufous-sided Towhee: 4 reports, with at least 2 surviving the entire period. Field Sparrow: 13 on MCC. White-throated Sparrow: unprecedented numbers. 320 on WCC, usual averages 100. 273 on MCC. 192 on Burrough's Count in Ulster, usual averages 75. Fox Sparrow: 2 winter birds in Dutch. 1 Mohonk Feb. 25 (DS), 2 near L. Sheldrake Feb. 24. Snow Bunting: not many; largest flocks 80 near Monticello Jan. 17-28, and 200 Jan. 25 in Dutch. Several other smaller flocks reported.

Pellwood Lake, Highland Falls, N.Y. 10928

REGION 10 – MARINE

ANTHONY J. LAURO and BARBARA J. SPENCER

Weather Data for the period:

	AV. HIGH TEMP.	AV. LOW TEMP.	PRECIP.
December	42.2° F (5.7° C)	29.5° F (-1.4° C)	3.63 In. (.04m)
January	34.2° F (1.2° C)	20.5° F (-6.4° C)	5.78 In. (.15m)
February	48.5° F (9.7° C)	31.1° F (-0.5° C)	3.13 In. (.08m)

The winter period for Region 10 can be best characterized as the year of the gull. Large numbers of Bonaparte's Gulls were present at the usual wintering spots at the inlets of Long Island. "White-winged" gulls, Black-headed and Little Gulls could be readily found at Fire Island Inlet, Moriches Inlet, Shinnecock Inlet and Montauk Point. The flower of the flock of this "Larid Assemblage" was the Ivory Gull discovered in February on the North Fork of Long Island. This is the fifth record for northeastern North America this winter.

Record high temperatures in February probably accounted for the presence of a Rough-winged Swallow at Cold Spring Harbor and a Forster's Tern at the Fire Island Inlet. A grey phase Gyrfalcon was found at Tobay Sanctuary, where an immature Goshawk also was noted.

Winter finches were present in erratic numbers, both in speciation and quantity. Evening Grosbeaks were very scarce, Red Crossbills were present throughout the period in good numbers; Common Redpolls briefly invaded the barrier beach area in January and moved inland where they were found with regularity through the season. Pine Siskins were generally hard to find on the south shore but they too were present at scattered interior locations.

The best duck found in the area was a female Barrow's Goldeneye at Montauk; a male and female Harlequin Duck wintered through most of the period at the Shinnecock Inlet and an awesome number of scoters blanketed the surf at Montauk Point although curiously, eiders were scarce. Two White-fronted Geese of doubtful origin were found co-mingling with other feral waterfowl; one at Lake Montauk, the other at Connetquot State Park.

The 1975 Christmas Counts for the area produced average results as to species, numbers and new birds to the count if one discounts the gerrymandered Lower Hudson Count whose results, while impressive, nevertheless came primarily from the New Jersey side of the Hudson River. The highlight of any Christmas count is of course the new birds added to the count. Obviously the longer a count is in existence, the harder this gets. The new birds in the Marine area counts: Bronx-Westchester—Indigo Bunting; Brooklyn—Least Sandpiper; Captree—Ruddy Turnstone; Central Suffolk—Yellow-crowned Night Heron, Least Bittern, Turkey, Iceland Gull, Little Gull, Kittiwake, Rose-breasted Grosbeak; Orient Point—Wood Thrush; Queens—Black-headed Gull, Glossy Ibis, Red Crossbill; Southern Nassau—Lincoln's Sparrow; Staten Island—Great Egret.

Another winter season comes to a close without the discovery of a Mew Gull. This bird is not on the New York State list. Considering that such exotica as Ivory Gull, Little Gull, Black-headed Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull have been found this past fall and winter, it's puzzling that this bird goes undiscovered year after year. The bird has been found in practically all, if not all, of the surrounding states of our region. It is only, of course, a matter of time until *Larus canus* is placed on the state list. Watch those Ring-billed Gulls!

The Federation Waterfowl Count produced a total of 71,455 birds. An eight year summary by compiler Stephen B. Dempsey shows high counts this year for Red-throated Loon, Mute Swan, Canada Goose, European Wigeon, American Wigeon, Redhead, White-winged Scoter, Surf Scoter, Ruddy Duck and American Coot. The low counts this year for that same eight year period are Black Duck, Common Goldeneye, and Ruddy Duck.

Another European Goldfinch has appeared at a feeder. This time it was a feeder in Seaford in late January. Seaford is directly west of their former breeding locale in Massapequa. Last summer one was found in North Massapequa. We know of no other foreign *Fringillid* appearing at south shore feeders and we question if these goldfinches can be continually dismissed as escaped cage birds. By the time this issue is in your hands, the breeding season will be upon us and the regional editors urge members living on the south shore of Long Island to look for breeding evidence of this bird, particularly in conjunction with breeding House Finches—because one of the regional editors was told that the bird noted in North Massapequa last year was nesting in the proximity of active House Finch nests. (See *American Birds*, Special Attention note October, 1975 Volume 29, Number 5, p. 954).

Observers: BC—Barbara Conolly; THD—Thomas H. Davis; AJL—Anthony J. Lauro; DP—Dennis Puleston; GSR—Gilbert S. Raynor; BS—Barbara Spencer.

LOONS—DUCKS: Red-necked Grebe: 1 Napeague Jan. 10 (DP). Eared Grebe: 1 Gardiner's Island Dec. 20 (T. W. Burke). Great Egret: 2 Dec. 6 Tobay (GSR); 12 Dec. 21 JBWR (THD *et al.*). Green Heron: 1 Hecksher S. P. (J. Black). Yellow-crowned Night Heron: imm. Mastic Dec. 27 (D. MacKenzie). **LEAST BITTERN:** 1 Dec. 27 Calverton (GSR). Rare in winter. Glossy Ibis: 1 to Dec. 6 Lawrence Marsh (R. Kelly); to Dec. 20 JBWR (mob); 1 to Dec. 20 Flushing Park (mob). Whistling Swan: 7 throughout Feb. Southampton-Sagaponack (mob). European Wigeon: 4 Feb. 16-29 Southampton (mob). **FULVOUS TREE DUCK:** 1 Tiana Beach Feb. 7 (M. & L. Scheibel *vide* A. Cooley). **BARROW'S GOLDENEYE:** 1 female Lake Montauk Jan. 31-Feb. 12 (THD, T. O'Connor, M. Reiss, BS, BC, *et al.*). Tufted Duck: 1 male Ward's Island Dec. 6 to early Feb. (J. A. Machado *et al.*). Harlequin Duck: 1 male Shinnecock Inlet Dec. 30, joined by a female Jan. 24, together to Feb. 28; pair wintered at Orient Point (P. Stoutenburgh); 1 male Easthampton Feb. 8 (Jill Hamilton). Black Scoter, Surf Scoter, White-winged Scoter: 20-30,000 Jan. 24 to Feb. 29 Montauk Point (mob), over 90% White-winged.

HAWKS—ALCIDS: Goshawk: 1 imm. wintered at Tobay Sanctuary; 1 imm. wintered at Brookhaven around residence of (DP) mainly feeding on Mourning Doves; 1 Manorville Feb. 9 (GSR). Merlin: 1 adult male Southampton Jan. 21 (GSR). **GYRFALCON:** 1 Tobay Dec. 6, gray phase, "flew few feet above ground ahead of Dave Larson and me along trail north of pond, wingspan nearly width of path, broad-based pointed wings, very uniform color" (GSR). **COMMON GALLINULE:** 1 Queens Christmas Count Dec. 20 (R. Dieterich). American Oystercatcher: 3 Dec. 4 Oak Beach Marsh (K. Feustel). Greater Yellowlegs: several wintered in the marshes at Jones Beach; also several along Dune Road in Shinnecock (GSR). **WILLET:** 1 West End, Jones Beach Jan. 17 (S. Stepinoff *et al.*), new late date. **LEAST SANDPIPER:** 1 JBWR Dec. 21 (THD). Long-billed Dowitcher: 1 Tobay to Jan. 4, very few winter records. Common Snipe: 35 Clove Lake Park, S. I. (H. Fischer *et al.*), new high winter total, 19 Water Mill Jan. 15 (BS, BC), 12 Sagaponack Feb. 20 (AJL). Red Phalarope: 1 Sunken Meadow S.P. Dec. 7 (M. Lindauer). Great Skua: 16 Miles south of Fire Island Dec. 6 (A. Lorenzetti). Pomarine Jaeger: 1 adult light phase plus a probable dark phase immature Dec. 13 Jones Beach State Park (THD, T. W. Burke, J. Gee). Glaucous Gull: several at Fire I. Inlet, Moriches Inlet, Shinnecock Inlet (mob), 1 Southold Feb. 8 (mob). Iceland Gull: as many as 4 at Fire Island Inlet Jan. 15 (AJL), most south shore inlets had one or two throughout the period. Black-headed Gull: 2 Dec. 20 Fire Island Inlet (THD), 1 Shinnecock Inlet Feb. 9 (DP). Lesser Black-backed Gull: 1 John Burns Park, Massapequa Dec. 9 (AJL). Laughing Gull: 1 Moriches Inlet Dec. 27 (A. Cooley), 1 Shinnecock Inlet Feb. 12 (BS, BC). Little Gull: Every major south shore inlet had one or two birds present at one time or another throughout the winter. **IVORY GULL:** Paul Stoutenburgh discovered an immature bird at Southold Feb. 8, which unfortunately expired on Feb. 9 or 10. Tom Davis and Davis Finch found the dead specimen on a small off-shore island on the afternoon of Feb. 10. The bird was very emaciated and cause of death was attributed to starvation. The bird was prepared as a study skin at the AMNH and the sex of the bird was determined to be

female. Black-legged Kittiwake: 1 Montauk Jan. 10 (GSR), an oiled bird at Fire Island Inlet in Jan. **FORSTER'S TERN**: 1 adult winter plumage Fire Island Inlet Feb. 23 (J. Bloss, S. Birnback) appeared during a relative heat wave. Second winter record. Razorbill: 1 Montauk Point Jan. 25 (THD). Thick-billed Murre: 1 Montauk Point Feb. 15 (R. W. Smart, D. Crumb). Dovekie: 1 off Montauk Dec. 20 (J. Trimble). **COMMON PUFFIN**: 2 Smith's Point Park, Fire Island Dec. 5 (approx); we quote Dennis Puleston "two birds were picked up on the ocean beach at Smith's Point in early December. One bird was dead and was turned over to me by the finder, in good condition in early Feb. It was not oiled or otherwise in poor condition. I have turned this bird over to John Bull. The other bird was living but apparently exhausted. It was taken into a beach cottage, warmed and given water, and after a couple of hours was released on the beach and flew out to sea in apparently good condition."

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Barn Owl: 1 Calverton Jan. 1, Jan. 21 (GSR); 1 wintered at Oak Beach from Dec. 20 on (THD, AJL). Snowy Owl: wintering birds; 1 vicinity Shinnecock-Moriches Inlet, 1 Jones Beach, 1 Port Washington area, 4 JFK Airport. **WHIP-POOR-WILL**: found dead Dec. 24 Brookhaven (DP), see *Kingbird*, Vol. XXVI, No. 1, p. 28 for details. Sapsucker: 2 Dec. 27 Central Suffolk C.C. (GSR). Red-headed Woodpecker: 1 imm. Brentwood Dec. 6 (GSR).

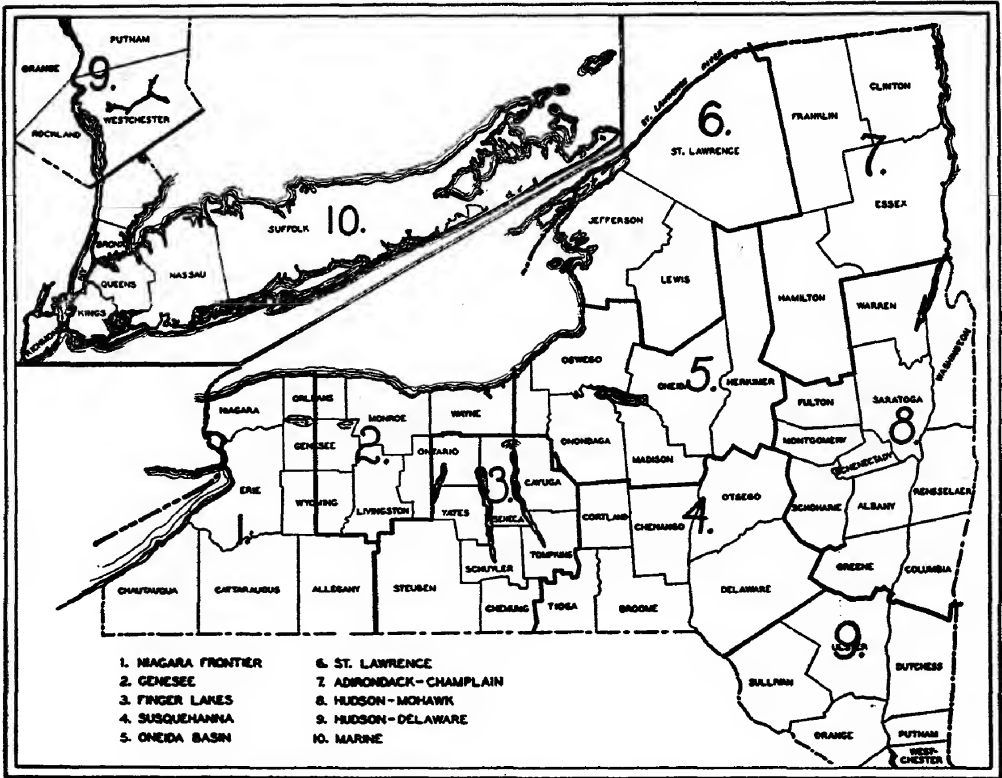
FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Tree Swallow: 2 Tobay Feb. 26 (R. Steinberg). **ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW**: 1 Cold Spring Harbor Feb. 19-20 (T. O'Connor, C. Loscalzo, BC, *et al.*), no previous winter record. Boreal Chickadee: 1 Bronx-Westchester C.C. late Dec.; 1 Moravian Cemetery, Staten Island, first S.I. record. Wood Thrush: 1 Shelter Island Dec. 29 (J. Clinton). Loggerhead Shrike: 1 wintered at Spring Creek Park, Howard Beach (mob). Northern Shrike: 1 imm. Beachhampton Dec. 20 (mob). 1 imm. Great Kills Park S.I. Jan. 25 (J. Yrizarry).

VIREOS-WARBLERS: Orange-crowned Warbler: 1 Rye Dec. 6 (T. W. Burke); 1 Shinnecock Hills Dec. 20 (R. Hoeflich). Pine Warbler: 1 R. Moses State Park, Feb. 28 (D. Wimpfheimer).

WEAVERS-SPARROWS: Northern Oriole: 1 Cypress Hills Brooklyn Jan. 15 (Mrs. Roberts). **ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK**: 1 Brookhaven Dec. 27 (DP) (GSR) state that this bird (which was a female) was definitely *not* a Black-headed Grosbeak. **BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK**: 1 Williamsbridge, Bronx Co. Jan. 26-Feb. 28 (J. Gillen *et al.*), photographed. **INDIGO BUNTING**: 1 Bronx Park Dec. 21 (T. Peszel), appears to be second winter record for state. Dickcissel: 1 Flushing Dec. 26 (W. Astle); 1 Matson feeder Eastport Feb. 21-29 (GSR). Chipping Sparrow: 8 Brookhaven Dec. 27 (DP). White-crowned Sparrow: 3 Yaphank (H. Halams *et al.*) Dec. 27. **LINCOLN'S SPARROW**: 1 Jones Beach Jan. 4 (A. Dignan). Common Redpoll: 90 Rye Jan. 11-17 (J. Gee *et al.*); present through Jan. and Feb. at Alley Pond Park with a peak of 150 on Jan. 13 (A. Wagner). Red Crossbill: 250 Jan. 4 Southern Nassau C.C.; 50 Tiana Beach Feb. 1 (AJL).

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REPORTING REGIONS



For descriptions of Regions see Kingbird Vol. IV Nos. 1 and 2

REPORTING DEADLINES

Winter Season: December, January, February
Deadline is March 7

Spring Season: March, April, May
Deadline is June 7

Summer Season: June, July, August
Deadline is September 7

Fall Season: September, October, November
Deadline is December 7

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